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ABSTRACT

The 1972-1975 Neighborhood Information Center (NIC) Project was undertaken in Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, and Queens Borough to demonstrate the feasibility of using existing library branches as neighborhood information centers. This summary evaluation utilized data from site visits, interviews with staff and clients, a questionnaire survey of resource agencies, and existing narrative and statistical reports, evaluations, and minutes to describe the nature of information and referral services in the public library. Each city's NIC was evaluated in the areas of service objectives, site, community involvement, publicity, NIC in the context of other library services, staffing, delivery of services, administration, future activities and plans, strengths and areas of attention, users and resource agencies. The project made visible the libraries' attempts at information and referral services and facilitated exchange of ideas and information. However, more objective measurements and research were needed. The study recommended the collection of data descriptive of information and referral operations, determination of more uniform definitions, and/or controlled field experimentation to determine the most efficient configuration for effective service delivery. (KP)

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Final Summary Report

Project No. L0075 JA
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Third Year Continuation of a Research and Design Criteria for the Implementation and Establishment of a Neighborhood Information Center in Five Public Libraries: Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, and Queens Borough.

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November 1975

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PREFACE

This is the final summary report of a demonstration in ten neighborhood libraries in the urban setting to show their relevance to the community as a link to needed services and a dependable source of information.

Five major public library systems joined in consortium in 1972 to demonstrate urban library development with a program using branch libraries as focal points or centers offering basic information and referral services for the citizen. Utilizing a $324,000 grant from the Bureau of Libraries and Learning Resources, the five cities: Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston and Queens Borough planned and began execution of the demonstration. The Cleveland Public Library served as the national coordinating agency. The local research and feasibility study for each city represented the first phase of the project. In Phase II the Cleveland Public Library pulled the results together in preparation for the actual implementation of service in each city. The final part, or the Implementation Phase, was planned for a six-month duration in which each city was provided funds to demonstrate in two branch libraries the effectiveness of offering I & R services to the neighborhood. A second year continuation permitted the project's extension through June 30, 1974. Dorothy Ann Turick, the National Project Officer from the Cleveland Public Library, wrote the Final Report at the conclusion of the grant period. The evaluative study of the project was conducted by Hardy Franklin of Rutgers University and William F. Summers, Jr. of the University of South Carolina.

The consortium agreed upon receipt of the third year continuation grant that the National Office would move to Houston from Cleveland. It was a basic decision of the members of the project to give each system the control of the direction of the program in each city while the National Office would assume a coordinative role and financial control responsibilities for the project. In keeping with this fundamental change from the original project, the consortium agreed that the final report and evaluative study should be made by an outside and independent authority. Because of his broad experience and study in the area of information transfer, the consortium chose Thomas Childers from the Drexel University, Graduate School of Library Science to conduct the evaluation and prepare this final summary report.

A strength of the original proposal which carried through to the conclusion of the project was the diversity of the participant systems and sites in the demonstration to show the effectiveness of the philosophy in each localized situation. Some libraries experienced extreme internal changes during the period of the project which undoubtedly affected

the results but in no case was the basic commitment of each diminished. It would be a mistake to judge an individual library's effectiveness against another's in the project because of the widely varying situations on the local scene. Where one library had a year's lead time on the project and had better insight into the problems of adequate information preparation, others brought a unique vitality or approach to the effort or a technical know-how which benefited the others. Each library contributed to the overall success of the project. It was an unusual experience where new ground was traveled successfully mainly because of experience learned through mutual effort.

The project was not intended to offer research in the field but rather clearly to demonstrate that the urban branch library is uniquely situated and equipped to provide information and referral services. The project experience has shown that the public library can provide effective information and referral services within its existing organizational framework and without introducing sophisticated and expensive techniques that other programs had shown. The methods used in each city could be easily replicated in most public library situations. Although the project target neighborhoods were disadvantaged, it could be effective in the opposite situation as well as participants in the project have already shown by extending the service into all branches.

Each library has experienced obstacles but certainly each library is viewed locally in a stronger light because each has proven itself to be a part, perhaps for the first time, of the total local scene and the program acted as a catalyst for the local system to bring it new vitality and purpose. Many have said the public library today is in jeopardy. This project experience has shown the importance of offering services that are in response to real user needs rather than creating or continuing services which are no longer valid. It is a local answer to a local problem.

David M. Henington, Director
Houston Public Library

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I. THE NATURE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE

Since the literature related to I & R is not very substantial and the history of I & R is not very long, we would expect the concepts and language associated with I & R to be rather unstable. That is indeed the case. Therefore, some clarification is in order before beginning to analyze the NIC project.

The essential goal of I & R service is to put the individual in touch with the service, activity, information or advice that will satisfy any of his everyday needs. (Hereafter, rather than repeat "service, activity, information or advice," we will refer to them collectively as "resources" or "resource.") The service is designed to bring the individual into contact with a needed resource -- sometimes in person, more frequently by way of telephone -- or to give him enough information so that he can make contact on his own.

Typically, I & R consists of a live, individualized response to an individual's inquiry. Even though they may be considered legitimate adjuncts to I & R service, the distribution of directories, bibliographies, pamphlets or other printed matter and the provision of actual services or commodities do not lie at the heart of I & R. Moreover, while it may be argued that the provision of information is a function of libraries and materials centers as well as I & R agencies, there is a fundamental difference: the information service in libraries and materials centers is overwhelmingly document-based. The service staff rely primarily on published sources of information, either distributing the documents themselves or distributing information retrieved from those documents. A major characteristic of an I & R agency is that it ordinarily draws on an unpublished, rapidly changing store of data in responding to inquiries. That store may be a card file, a notebook, or the memory of the staff. While the library staff may use such unpublished sources in satisfying some inquiries, the vast bulk of their responses depend on published documents.

I & R: Intensity

What is practiced under the name of "I & R" can vary greatly. The range of services offered can include any or all of the following.

- Steering. Giving information about where to go for a service, activity, information or advice (that is, a resource), and/or information about how to secure them.
- Referring. Making contact with a resource on behalf of the client. This can include bringing the client into contact with a dispenser of the resource in your presence, or paving the way for the client prior to actual involvement.[1] The underlying purpose is to facilitate the client's access to the needed

resource by articulating the client's needs and interpreting the activities, eligibility requirements, etc. of the dispenser of the resource.

- Counseling. A form of advice, sometimes entailing deep probing of the client's personal problems, empathetic listening, and advising on solutions to complex personal problems.
- Advising. Providing the client with judgments about the resources available, in order to speed the client's selection of the proper resource or dispenser.
- Advocacy. Assuming a position as champion of the client's needs and rights, and working to satisfy those needs and secure those rights for the client. It may necessitate adopting an adversary posture, vis-a-vis the relevant dispensers.
- Social reporting. Providing feedback to dispensers, their governors or the public on the effectiveness of social services, as gleaned from the process of steering and referral. This particular activity can range from the more neutral (disclosure of statistics about the success of referrals), to the politically inflammable (critic of individual services).
- Follow-through. A rather nebulous concept, implying that the I & R worker takes whatever steps are deemed necessary to be reasonably sure that the client is being steered or referred to the proper resource.
- Follow-up. Ascertaining whether or not a client has actually received what he needed subsequent to being steered or referred to a resource.
- Escort. Providing the client with transportation to the needed resource. When offered, it is usually limited to the elderly, extremely indigent or handicapped.
- Casefinding and "outreach." Promoting the I & R service to the target group population and soliciting inquiries, and determining their I & R needs.

The relationships among I & R activities can be seen in the diagram below. Steering, Referring, and Counseling are the three basic I & R services. The remaining activities can be viewed as <u>levels</u> of service that qualify or enhance each of the basic services, depending upon the inclination of staff of the particular I & R agency.

Steering

Advice
Advocacy
Follow-through
Follow-up
Social Reporting

Escort
Casefinding/Outreach

Counseling Referring

Of course, I & R activities vary in the way in which they are delivered, too. It hardly needs to be said that they can be applied with anything from zeal to apathy, from whole-hearted dedication to the plight of the client to perfunctory lip service.

I & R: Scope

I & R services vary in their intended scope, as well as in their intensity. They may be limited to a specific topic, such as social security or drug abuse; to a target group, such as the aging, the poor, or adolescents; to a geographic area, such as the so-called Model Cities impact areas, or specific regions within a state. Some I & R services purport to be omnibus agencies, covering all population groups and a vast range of topics within a particular geographic area. Examples of omnibus I & R agencies can be found in some municipal health and welfare councils, mayor's information offices, and sometimes in public libraries.

It is safe to say that the vast majority of I & R services focus on disadvantaged target populations of one kind or another. The aging and the urban poor are the two groups most frequently served. I & R service is rarely directed specifically at middle class, affluent, rural or suburban populations. Even if the disadvantaged are not specifically singled out as the target of an I & R service, they are frequently the de facto recipients of it, inasmuch as (1) most I & R services are centrally concerned with directing clients to social services that are designed to aid the disadvantaged, (2) the disadvantaged, to a greater degree than other groups in the general population, lack knowledge about the resources in society that can help them cope with life, and therefore they appear to have a greater need for being directed to these resources, and (3) the disadvantaged often have fewer of the skills that facilitate their identifying, contacting, and securing service from the dispensers.[2]

Problems vs. Opportunities

It is likely that most I & R services were originally designed to solve problems among the client group, as opposed to increasing their access to opportunities. The line between problems and opportunities is a fine one at best. However, to the extent that I & R has been problem-oriented, this orientation may have been important in pre-determining who the clients would be, and which

resources clients would be most frequently referred or steered to. Thus I & R may have become established as a generally lower-class service, associated with welfare, crises, and a disadvantaged style of life. The general population may see "How do I get my welfare benefits increased?" as a legitimate demand on an I & R service; they may view "Where can I find an advanced pottery course, free" as an improper demand.

Resource File

An I & R service usually revolves around a directory, or resource file, of agencies, organizations, or individuals (dispensers) who can provide the services, activities, information or advice (that is, resources) that the clients need. The resource file is usually either a published directory, a data base accessible through a computer terminal, or a file of cards. In fact, it may be a combination of these.

The content of the records in the file can vary greatly from I & R center to I & R center. It invariably contains the name, phone number and address of the dispenser. It may include a description of activities, either brief or detailed; the name of a contact person and/or person in charge; hours of service; eligibility requirements; evaluations of the resource by the I & R staff; source of support for the agency or organization; the qualifications of the staff; date of last update of the record; an evaluation of the agency's performance.

An I & R center may assume responsibility for its own resource file. If so, updating the file may be a major activity of the I & R staff. An alternative mode is for the I & R center to depend for its data base on some outside source, such as a health and welfare council, planning group, or city department.

II. THE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S POTENTIAL FOR I & R

A rationale for providing I & R through the public library has been developed in other publications.[3,4] Drawing from existing literature and from observations during the course of visits to the five NIC cities, we can compose a list of characteristics of the public library that make it a potentially desirable site for I & R service, vis-a-vis other existing or as yet undeveloped agencies. It would probably be most beneficial for the development of both public libraries and I & R services if the following assertations were taken as hypotheses that require further testing.

1. Librarians and library assistants are skilled in gathering, organizing, and retrieving information. Their greatest strength lies in organizing and retrieving. For the most part, moving into the community to collect information about the wide range of available resources is not part of their formal training, nor is it a standard aspiration. This implies the need for altering both the store of skills and the prevailing attitude among librarians.

2. Through a system of carefully placed branches, libraries are the most widely dispersed -- and therefore potentially community-specific -- municipal agency, other than the police and fire departments. As well, the library is often open many hours, including evenings and week-ends.

3. In addition, the fact that each neighborhood branch is a formal part of a city-wide system offers the potential of rapid system-wide communication, uniform levels of training and service throughout the city, and a larger base of support (in terms of staff, space, and money) than a single branch would afford.

4. The public library is dedicated to serving its total public. To the extent that the public library is concerned with reaching all its constituency, it might find promise in a service like I & R, which has the potential of reaching currently unreached groups.

5. The public library is one of the most neutral service agencies in virtually any town or city in the country. This characteristic enhances its position when dealing with agencies that cover a broad spectrum of political, cultural and ideological orientations.

6. The public library is rich in some of the resources that can aid in satisfying people's needs. The book and non-book materials already in libraries is an important source of information that can supplement the I & R resource file.

III. THE NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION CENTER PROJECT

In July, 1972, the Office of Education, Division of Library Programs, began funding a consortium of five metropolitan public libraries: Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston and Queens Borough. The consortium was planned as a one-year project. Its original purpose was "to research the feasibility of the branch library as a neighborhood information center, and to present an implementation plan for establishing a demonstration center in each city." Its major objectives were to demonstrate to neighborhood residents and the community at large that the urban public library can be a vital force in daily living, will provide free information, will refer residents to additional sources for information and assistance, and that the library can adapt itself in non-traditional ways to meet the needs of those who have not previously used public library services, and have neither experience, nor knowledge of the role a public library can play in the daily life of the residents of the community;" and "to provide survival information or referral information assistance to people who may be in lower income brackets...who may have little or limited education...."[5]

The "consortium" provided a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas. Each of the cities remained largely autonomous in its own execution of the project's missions. Initially, Cleveland Public Library was to monitor and facilitate the project. In July 1974, Houston was assigned this role.

The project consisted of three phases. In Phase I, each city undertook a feasibility study to assess its communities' information needs, availability of information, established I & R services, the library's desired role in providing I & R services, and the readiness of the library to assume that role.

In Phase II, the coordinating city was charged with developing broad criteria and guidelines for implementing neighborhood information centers.

In Phase III, actual implementation took place. Each city was charged with establishing neighborhood information centers in its library branches. Originally, this phase was to run for six months. Subsequent extensions of federal funding permitted this phase to continue for an additional two years, so that the period of implementation for some cities totaled 2-1/2 years. Funding terminated on June 30, 1975.

The following report will concentrate on the current state of implementation of I & R service in the five city libraries, and the lessons that can be learned and the questions that the experience has raised.

IV. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

"Data" for this summary evaluation were collected in several distinct ways: personal visits to the five cities and interviews with selected staff members; existing narrative reports, minutes and evaluations; existing statistical reports; interviews of clients; and questionnaires sent to resource agencies.

Visits to the Five Cities

See Appendix A for the list of sites visited and persons interviewed.

Interviews of NIC clients

In an effort to collect some data about users of the NIC services, each city was instructed to conduct very brief structured interviews with every other NIC client during two weeks in late March and early April. The interview form was pretested in Houston prior to application in all five cities. The interview form and the instructions for interviewing are reproduced in Appendixes B and C.

Questionnaires to Resource Agencies

The primary purposes of questioning the resource agencies about NIC-related services were to (1) establish the extent to which other service agencies knew of the existence of NIC service, and (2) to uncover their feelings about general I & R services in the city. The questionnaire was pretested in Houston. In Appendix E, F and G can be found the sample cover letter that each city sent out with its questionnaires, the questionnaire itself, and instructions for administering it.

V. THE FIVE CITIES: THEIR NIC EXPERIENCES

In the following pages each city is described and evaluated separately. Then follow summary observations.

ATLANTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Service Objectives

The concept of the NIC that emerges from the Atlanta Public Library is a diffused and sometimes confusing one. The point of most frequent agreement from individual to individual, top administration to service personnel, is that the NIC was established to help people get to the resources they need for coping with everyday life. Some branch staff view this as a service primarily for disadvantaged clients; others feel that the service should be just as valuable to middle class or affluent constituencies. Some branch staff consider advocacy to be a natural part of the service; others do not. Some try to provide escort service, using their own cars and gasoline; others do not offer the service.

Certain services that are outside the realm of pure information dissemination are offered as NIC services: voter registration is conducted in each branch; one person in each branch is certified as a notary public; and an Adult Reading Development program has been offered from time to time. The first two services are frequently, but not universally, held by those interviewed to be bonafide components of the NIC program. Adult Reading Development was rarely mentioned as an NIC activity.

In some ways, the concept of the NIC becomes more diffused at the very top of the library system than at the point of middle management. The Government Information Center, a repository of federal and city documents, is considered by a number of the top administration to be a NIC activity. In fact, the central NIC and the Government Information Center are housed in the same room. However, the central NIC and the Government Information Center staff see their services as only loosely related to each other.

This dichotomy in the concept of NIC held by the upper administration as opposed to the service staff is a function of an expanded view of the Library's information-related objectives held by some of the top administrators. The director of the library, particularly, sees the library as the central information utility for the city of Atlanta. He envisions a strong information service that will gather and disseminate information needed by citizens, politicians, and city planners on the services, demographics, activities, and human

resources of Atlanta. There are several parts planned for this omnibus information function: the Government Information Center, the Telephone Ready Reference (a more or less standard book-based information activity), NIC, and two developing activities: the Integrated Information System and the Educational Options File.

The Integrated Information System consists of two parts. The first will be a compendium of neighborhood profiles developed from data gathered by the library and other municipal agencies. The second is called the Citizens Participation Information System, consisting of a roster of neighborhood organizations throughout Atlanta. It is intended that both these files will be computerized and will be accessible only through a terminal in Atlanta Public Library's central facility.

The Educational Options File will be a computerized file of formal and informal continuing educational opportunities.

The director, particularly, sees the NIC as only a small part of the whole package of information services that the library is aspiring to provide. It did not appear, however, that this particular vision is shared by his deputies, middle managers, or service staff.

Sites

Full-fledged NIC service is located in the central library and in the Kirkwood and South branches. Both branches serve predominately black, low-income neighborhoods. The resources for answering NIC questions have been sent to all branches in the system, thus extending the potential for NIC service to every part of the city, from impoverished to affluent.

Community Involvement

Both Kirkwood and South branches have community boards that advise them on program planning, including the NIC. South's board is especially active. There appears to be no formal means of community advice on NIC matters for the rest of the library system.

Publicity

Publicity has consisted of flyers, posters, newspaper ads, and radio and television spot announcements. The level of publicity is considered "modest" by most of those spoken to. Personal contacts by the branch staff provide another source of publicity. This varies considerably, of course, from branch to branch.

NIC in the Context of Other Library Services

From all appearances, the NIC program has not caused much displacement in the library system as a whole. While it is obvious that a certain amount of effort has gone into its development, it is also obvious that the NIC program, per se, has not refocussed the efforts of the total library staff in any significant way. It seems that, with the exception of the Kirkwood and South branches (the original NIC locations), NIC service remains low on the list of branch priorities.

The lack of vigor and unity surrounding APL's NIC program can be explained by a number of possible conditions: (1) the idea of I & R is repugnant to the service staff; (2) without strong commitment to NIC from top management, staff is unwilling to gamble on committing themselves; (3) the staff members hold differing views of what "NIC" is, because of the lack of clear definitions system-wide. It appears that all of these conditions come into play, to one degree or another.

Outside of the staff working in the central NIC office, one of the top system administrators and the branch librarians at the Kirkwood and South branches, no one who was interviewed suggested that the NIC activities were a very high priority for the Library. There was no suggestion by top management that NIC activities be absorbed into the regular library budget when federal funding ends; and both branch and administrative personnel (other than the NIC-designated staff) seemed to spend far less of their time on NIC activities than on any other single service activity.

The NIC program, for those outside the central NIC and the two full-fledged NIC branches, remains a foreign and nebulous thing. The librarian who was inclined in the past to provide I & R service continues to do so; the one who was not so inclined has probably not changed significantly. The immediate impact of the NIC program has been limited to the two full-fledged branches, Kirkwood and South. There, NIC service is fairly closely integrated with other library service and seems to be an important activity. This is most likely attributable to the special commitment of their respective branch staffs.

NIC staffing

The responsibility for NIC services in each branch rests with the branch librarian. He or she may designate someone else to oversee day to day operations.

In April of 1975, three full-time professional librarians and two part-time paraprofessionals were paid for by NIC funds. They were deployed as NIC staff members in the branches and at central.

System wide, staff training has been limited to those involved in the two original NIC branches and the central NIC. The training consumed approximately 1/2 day for each staff member. In addition, 1 person from each branch attended general orientations to I & R service when the NIC project was first launched.

Related to the NIC activities, eight paraprofessionals under the Model Cities program were trained intensively for eight weeks by outside I & R specialists. They were concerned primarily with such social action as welfare services, bail-bond, parole, and court-related activity. In many cases they assumed an advocacy role for their clients and were active even to the extent of occasionally having a young person paroled in arrangements for client privacy; offices and staff rooms are available for this purpose.

Theoretically, the foundation of the service is the Rolodex file that exists in every branch. It consists of 5 by 8 cards arranged by subject. The Rolodex is maintained by the central NIC. There, new information is duplicated on Rolodex cards and sent out to the branches. The file was originally based on the Directory of Community Services, published by the Community Council of the Atlanta Area, Inc. Additions to the file and updating of entries are now the responsibility of the Atlanta Public Library. The actual use of the Rolodex file varies considerably. At best, it is used in moderation. Some branches claim to have never used it; rather, they claim to prefer their own home-spun community resource file, or the old Directory of Community Services, or "what's in my head."

Administration

The style of administering NIC activities is essentially laissez-faire, from branch to branch. The branch librarians are given great autonomy in defining, promoting and delivering NIC services.

At the highest administrative level, there is some uncertainty as to where the responsibility for NIC activities lies. This uncertainty is apparent among some of the upper administration and some branch personnel, alike. Officially, the library director is responsible for coordinating the NIC project; the Administrative Coordinator is in charge of statistics compilation and voter registration activities.

Activities on the Immediate Horizon

Work is proceeding on the Integrated Information System, described above. This file -- which will soon be computerized -- will provide demographic profiles of Atlanta's communities and a detailed roster of the city's organizations.

Planning continues on the development of a (perhaps) computerized file of formal and informal continuing educational opportunities, the Educational Options File.

Atlanta's Department of Community and Human Development is establishing multi-service agencies throughout the city. One is open now, and one is planned for the near future. These agencies will contain branch libraries, along with other city services. NIC activities are intended to be a major strength in these library outlets.

There are no concrete plans for the future of the NIC's. The library administration hopes that the city will pick up the funding of the few staff positions now being carried by federal funds.

Plans for the More Distant Future

The long-term hope is that the Atlanta Public Library will become the single most important source of information for the citizens and community leaders of Atlanta.

Evaluation

Atlanta's strengths in the NIC Project, compared with some of the other cities, are few. The major asset is the vision of the NIC as a small part of a very wide-ranging information utility in the Public Library, yet this vision appears not to have been communicated much beyond the director's office.

Several conditions at APL do not augur well for the future of NIC in Atlanta. First, the commitments of top management -- particularly the director -- are fairly divided among traditional, new (current), and new (future) activities. The focussing of money, time and spirit that is necessary to nurture a fairly revolutionary change (as I & R in public libraries is) is absent. A strong commitment to the concept of NIC would have probably been evidenced in the Library's publicity, staff orientation and continual training, clarity of purpose and general staff enthusiasm -- none of which were strong.

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Service Objectives

Unlike the other cities, Cleveland's NIC service objectives have changed substantially over the course of the three years. While the project has been constantly viewed as a link between the citizen's need and the resources that can satisfy his need, the posture of that link has changed. Before July 1974, the service consisted of a high proportion of referral, a substantial amount of advocacy, occasional purchasing of bus tickets out of NIC funds for clients in need, and a goal of 100% followup with both agencies and clients. These activities were supplemented by the simplest form of service, steering.

Between July 1974 and January 1975, a hiatus occurred. During the first part of the period NIC activities were curtailed, pending the release of the third year's NIC funds from the Office of Education. During the latter part of the period, staff at the central library began a comprehensive updating of the system-wide NIC files; branch NIC's were still dormant, awaiting the completion of the updating.

Since January 1975, when the files were ready and NIC service was made available in all the branches of the system, it has been significantly different in posture than it was in the original three NIC branches. In essence, it is now a centrally maintained directory of resources in the greater Cleveland area. The directory is used by library staff to steer clients to the agencies that fit their needs. The service does not include any significant amounts of referral, counseling, advocacy, follow-through or follow-up. As is currently conceived, the service closely resembles classical book-based directory service, with the exception that (1) instead of providing information out of published directories, the staff provides the information out of a directory that is maintained in-house; (2) the directory is oriented toward helping people cope with their everyday problems; and (3) on rare occasions follow-up will be made.

Also included under NIC activities is a voter registration program, now under way in all branches of the system.

Sites

Before July 1974, NIC service was offered at the Jefferson, South and Langston Hughes branches. The communities in which these branches are located are lower-middle class and poor neighborhoods, in keeping with the original intention to provide NIC service to citizens who are disadvantaged and who are not regular library users. Residents

of the neighborhoods vary from Eastern European, to Appalachian immigrants, to poor urban blacks. Two of the branches -- Jefferson and Langston Hughes -- are being considered for closing in the near future; book circulation in these branches has been plummeting over the past several years and is currently very low.

Since January 1975, all branches have received a copy of the updated resource file, and are thereby empowered to offer NIC service.

(As an additional extension of NIC service, CPL has provided resource files, along with continual updating service, to all the eight other library systems in Cuyahoga County. These systems have also been invited to participate in an NIC orientation session.)

Community Involvement

The original three NIC branches each had committees of community residents which advised on the NIC programs. Despite the fact that these committees occasionally precipitated some conflict within Cleveland Public Library over the matter of branch control, they were considered valuable in introducing NIC service to the respective communities. Currently, there are no community groups actively concerned with the NIC program.

Publicity

Before July 1974, publicity consisted of newspaper feature articles, radio and television spot announcements, posters, flyers, announcements in church bulletins, and word-of-mouth.

Since July 1974, publicity has been sparse. System-wide, the only promotional effort has been the production of a flyer announcing the NIC program, distributed primarily within the branches. As well, individual branches have undertaken some advertisement of NIC service through neighborhood church bulletins, local papers and community meetings. There are concrete plans for additional publicity -- new posters, handouts, public service announcements through the media, and bus placards -- but the production and distribution of these items has been awaiting the release of NIC funds from Houston.

NIC in the context of other library services

When the NIC program underwent its conversion from a less conventional to a more conventional kind of program, its relationship to the total library program changed, as well.

Originally, NIC service was maintained within the three NIC branches as a wholly autonomous service. It was staffed by newly-hired community aides and was housed in specially constructed cubicles within the branches. The NIC staff were responsible to the chief of the Department of Urban Services, not their respective branch librarians. Moreover, they operated under a looser code of conduct and a higher salary scale than the regular library staff.

It appears that the two services -- traditional library service and the NIC -- were purposefully disintegrated. There was ample evidence of disintegration: lack of communication between the two staffs, bitterness over differential salaries and codes of conduct, and quite naturally, lack of support or understanding of the NIC program by the non-NIC staff.

After July 1974, the differentiation between NIC and other staff was dissolved. Regular library staff is now responsible for the branch NIC, and the service is being offered from the regular service points (primarily, the adult reference desk).

The NIC program in Cleveland ranks high among the priorities of a few staff of the Cleveland Public Library -- notably the staff who have been most intimately attached to its development over the past three years. It could be said, though, that neither the concept nor the objectives of NIC service are warmly embraced by the library staff as a whole. At virtually every level, the staff interviewed expressed interest in the idea of NIC and willingness to do a little extra in order to provide a new service. However, it is obvious that top managers by and large view NIC service as an objective secondary to the traditional library activities. It does not appear likely that they will redirect any significant resources to NIC activities, beyond the possible continuation of a small office to maintain a central NIC resource file. The middle management and service staff who were interviewed appear to reflect the lack of strong endorsement from above. They are willing to do something new, but they are not willing to do anything that will displace the traditional services and activities; several staff expressed concern over being cast in the role of "social workers."

NIC staffing

Currently, the branch librarian is responsible for overseeing NIC activities within each branch. The regular non-clerical public service staff provide NIC service. Most branch librarians have received an introduction to the use of the NIC resource file; in addition, most of them attend a system-wide meeting with a social service agency representative, one a month. Branch librarians are

expected to train their own staffs. The central NIC service is provided by the librarian who is in charge of the central NIC office.

Delivery of Service

NIC service is available in every branch and the central library, by phone or in person. There is no capability for three-way phone conversations. Each branch has been asked to limit its outgoing calls to about 225 per month.

A single resource file serves all NIC outlets. A copy of that file is located in every branch, at the central branch office, at two departments of the main library and in all public libraries in Cuyahoga County.

The central office is charged with developing the resource file. Some assistance is received from the branches in the form of feedback; but the branch staff carries no formal responsibility for maintaining the resource file, except for adding and deleting the cards at the direction of the central office. The file consists of 3 by 5 cards, ordered in two ways: first, by subject, with a given entry repeated as many times as necessary under appropriate subjects; second, alphabetically by agency name. As of April 1975, the file contains over 750 entries representing agencies, service outlets, information sources, and some commercial enterprises (for example, used clothing) in greater Cleveland.

Administration

Since July 1974, when the concept of NIC was expanded to encompass the whole library system, the Department of Branches has overseen the system-wide development of the NIC. The director of the Department of Branches has delegated most of the NIC management activities to the central NIC office, which consists of one professional librarian and one clerk. They are charged with updating and expanding the resource file; providing new cards to all branches, ready for filing; planning training events; producing brochures; and providing central NIC service.

A very brief background of the library's administration may enhance understanding of NIC service in Cleveland. The current director has been on the job for only a half year. Preceding his arrival the library was torn by a series of disputes among the library board and citizens, and the director of the library and an administrative assistant -- who were, importantly, the Project Director and the Project Coordinator for the national NIC Project -- resigned. As one staff member put it, Cleveland Public Library "had a nervous breakdown."

Activities on the Immediate Horizon

A major competitor with the NIC service is the Federation for Community Planning's Community Information Service (CIS). The NIC central office has made overtures to the managers of the CIS with regard to cooperating in file building. The real possibility of such cooperation seems to await CIS's updating of its own files.

While the plans are not concrete, there is the desire (1) to expand the resource file to include more consumer-related entries and (2) to improve staff training.

Plans for the more Distant Future

As far as could be determined, the plans for the future of the NIC are very nebulous. There is a predominant feeling among the service staff and the administration that some kind of NIC activity will continue; but there is no certainty about the level it will continue at. Even the future of the small central NIC office is threatened by impending fiscal crises. At the present time, the best prognosis would be for a weak and peripheral NIC service in Cleveland Public Library.

Evaluation

The strength in Cleveland's NIC program is primarily its resource file. Since the fall of 1974 the vast majority of energy devoted to NIC business has been focused on developing and maintaining a resource file that is broad in coverage, accurate, current, and easy to use. The two people in the central NIC office who have been responsible for this job have made impressive advancements toward this goal.

As with Atlanta, however, weaknesses outweigh strengths. Perhaps most important, there does not now exist a strong system-wide commitment -- either emotional or financial -- to NIC by top management. There appears, too, to be a need for considerable system-wide orientation and training in order to convey (1) a sense of enthusiasm for and commitment to the venture and (2) a consistent picture of what NIC service is. (Some staff did not consider voter registration one of the NIC services, even though it is; some staff were confused as to what lengths they should go to in responding to a client's query.)

Publicity of Cleveland's NIC is far from vigorous. This, coupled with the lack of strong endorsement from the top of the organization, may account for the very low volume of NIC transactions with the public. Potential clients are unaware of the service, and so do not ask for it.

Staff are uneasy or uncertain about the service, and so are not inclined to promote it.

A more tangible weakness exists in the telephone service available in each branch. The number of outgoing calls that each branch is allowed, under the existing contract with the telephone company, is quite limited. A number of the staff seem to be consciously restraining their telephoning. While the volume of NIC inquiries currently does not test the effects of such a limitation, it is clear that only a modest influx of queries that require return phone calls will tax the call-out quotas. The anomaly of such a limitation on a service that typically receives 90% of its intake by phone and requires a substantial amount of return calls to clients and calls to resource units, is obvious.

It is clear that the Cleveland NIC program has little or no impact at this time. Changes are in the making, and it may be that the importance of NIC will grow and that its impact will eventually be felt by Cleveland's residents. If, however, the future of NIC consists merely of maintaining activity at the current levels, it would be wise to perform a simple analysis of the costs and outputs. For example, estimating that the cost of maintaining the central NIC office is at least $20,000 per year -- and ignoring other costs hidden in various librarians' and clerks' energy throughout the system -- the monthly systemwide intake of NIC questions would have to quadruple, <u>without additional expenditure</u>, in order to bring the unit cost of NIC queries down to $5 each.

It is possible that commitment to the NIC concept could grow and that NIC services would become an integral and important new dimension of CPL's program. However, considering the expressions of commitment by the upper administration and the continuing erosion of the library's fiscal strength, this is not a likely turn of events in the foreseeable future.

DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY

<u>Preface</u>

Detroit Public Library's top administration began talking about some kind of information and referral service in July 1970; preliminary work on such a service began early in 1971. NIC project funds did not actually commence until 18 months later, in July of 1972. In early 1973 the I & R services was expanded to all 31 branches in the system and the central library as well.

Detroit's I & R service has been called TIP -- The Information Place -- since its conception. In this report, however, it will be referred to as "NIC."

Service Objectives

The major objective of NIC service in Detroit appear to be consistent throughout the system. It is conceived as a live directory to all the resources available in the city of the state to the Detroit citizen. From this directory, steering and referral service is provided.

The actual service that is delivered, however, varies considerably from branch to branch. Somewhere in the library system instances can be found of extensive follow-up and referrals, and occasional escort service, advocacy and social reporting. Likewise, we could identify at least one branch in the system where very little referral and follow-up service is offered, and where escort, advocacy and social reporting are non-existent. It appears that these differences from branch to branch have resulted from conscious decisions about the needs of the specific constituencies of each branch and from the actual service demands brought to the branch by the NIC users. While the level of service undoubtedly varies with the commitment of the individual branch librarian, differences from branch to branch do not seem to emanate from any confusion about what TIP should or could be.

Some differences in service result from three branches' designation as NIC demonstration branches. Their charge is to experiment with new or expanded TIP services. The extent of their experimenting varies considerably. Bowen is offering a very intensive kind of NIC service. The staff there does some house to house canvassing -- handing flyers to residents and doing some case finding in the process. About 50% of the time the staff actually refers the client, and they engage in some advocacy and social reporting. On the other hand, Gray is currently doing very little in the way of demonstrating, since the branch will soon be moving into a multi-service family center. At that point, they will begin experimenting with a new, potentially closer relationship with the other agencies in the center. At the Lincoln branch the demonstration activities include a series of social service programs for senior citizens, high school equivalency diploma classes two days each week, and a concerted effort to establish strong relationships with the local police precinct and YMCA.

NIC service is seen by most staff as primarily benefiting the more disadvantaged people in Detroit. However, there is substantial evidence in the Chaney branch that it can be of value to middle-class constituencies. The success of the NIC in this middle-class community is probably attributable to both the commitment and

experience of the branch librarian. (She was one of the group that began the preliminary work in 1971 and was previously attached to Lincoln Branch, one of the first branches with NIC service.)

Sites

NIC service is available in all 29 branches and the central library, on both a phone and in-person basis.

Community Involvement

In Work Product III, submitted to the Research Officer for the national NIC project in September 1972, the position of the Detroit Public Library on the subject of community advisory groups was clearly laid out. In brief summary, it states that formal community advisory groups are of little value, at best, and at their worst, can deteriorate into platforms for personal aggrandizement. The statement proposes that the most effective means of involving the community in the planning and activities of the branch library is through other means, such as community walks and frequent, informal contacts with key individuals and groups in the community.

To all appearances, this statement has had the effect of policy, for there is virtually no formal community advisory group that advises on programming or other activities in the Detroit library system. Involvement with the community, though, is quite strong in some areas of the city, by virtue of a number of activities.

Community walks have been a part of the NIC program since the beginning and are conducted by all branches. They consist of branch staff visiting the businesses and agencies in their catchment area, usually along the major business strips. The purpose is to sell the concept of NIC and other library services. Very incidentally, data for the resource files may be collected on the walks.

At some branches, there are extensive efforts to attend meetings of community organizations and agencies, both to sell the idea of NIC (and other library services) and to understand better the nature of local services and activities. At least one branch (Bowen) engages in canvassing -- knocking on the doors of arbitrarily selected residences in the community, handing flyers to the people who answer the door, and talking about NIC. Occasionally actual NIC service will be initiated during the canvassing; but the primary objective is to promote the new service.

Publicity

As was reported by Franklin and Summers in an earlier report, the NIC was the focus of an intensive city-wide publicity campaign that was donated by a Detroit advertising firm. Three hundred thousand handbills and 100 posters, custom-tailored for each branch, were distributed throughout the city. Buses displayed over 1200 bus cards, and 15 billboards carried the NIC message. There were 30 twenty-second television spots, 7 television news features, and 100 ten- and thirty-second radio spots.[6] This publicity campaign was waged primarily in the first two years of NIC funding. While some publicity continues to date, the top administration of the library acknowledges the need for a renewed campaign.

NIC in the Context of Other Library Services

Of all the five cities, the concept of NIC is best integrated into the other library activities in Detroit. From the beginning, the top administration (especially the director and deputy director) were strongly committed to the concept and implementation of the idea. They sought to make it a regular library activity, as indistinguishable from other library services as possible. During the early days of NIC and continually reinforced into the present, this commitment was broadcast throughout the library system. It was made clear that the NIC venture was not merely an ephemeral project, but rather a permanent expansion of the library's mission.

This level of commitment is visible, for the most part, throughout the staff. Some staff who have been most resistant to the idea have left. Still, it appears that there are some remaining in the system with a low-grade of resistance to the idea of NIC. Yet the level of commitment to this significantly new kind of service is remarkably high all through the system. NIC is seen by all service staff as the director's highest priority. The service staff, too, consider NIC to be a very important service. Several of the branch librarians interviewed seemed to be very strongly committed to the concept. This is not to say that they did not see some problems with the management of various aspects of it; but on the whole they consider NIC a vital part of the total package of library service.

NIC Staffing

In conformance with their objective of completely integrating NIC into the other library activities, NIC service has been maintained by the regular staff, with few exceptions. In some branches community aides have been hired. (Community aides are local residents who work as

clerks and paraprofessionals.) At Bowen and Gray community aides, just as all the staff, are active in providing NIC service.

At the central library NIC service is not integrated with other library activities. A distinct NIC staff is designated. Their sole responsibility is to staff the NIC desk at the central library; no other central library staff provides the service. The NIC staff consists of three professional librarians and one clerk.

Also housed in the central library is the Clearinghouse, which provides major NIC support to all the branches and to the central NIC desk. The four persons on this staff consist of one librarian and three clerical workers.

At the present time, NIC funds are being expended on half of the time of a librarian and a community aide at the Bowen branch, and half of the time of a community aide at Gray.

In each branch, the branch librarian is responsible for NIC service.

During the first two years of federal funding, there was a relatively high level of training related to NIC. An attempt was made to reach all professional service personnel in the system with an introduction to the NIC idea and its importance, the technology upon which the NIC is built, and the techniques and attitudes needed to provide NIC service and maintain community contact. During the past year there has been no purposeful training effort, system-wide. Some branches do engage in their own training efforts, and all branches are free to call on the Clearinghouse for advice and assistance in any training needs.

Delivery of Service

NIC service is offered by phone or in person at every branch and at the central library. All branches have an extra phone line for NIC calls; however, they can and do receive NIC inquiries on all lines. The central NIC desk has several phone lines dedicated to NIC service alone. It is the central NIC number that has been advertised as the system-wide source of the new service. Consequently, a number of queries that have the potential for being answered at the branch level are drawn to the central number. This has the effect of magnifying the output of the central NIC, while diminishing the output of the branches.

Many branches have the capacity for three-way conversations among NIC worker, the client and an agency.

The resource files for the whole system are developed centrally in the Clearinghouse. There are currently in the central file over 1000 entries. This same file, on 3X5 cards, is duplicated in every branch and at the central NIC branch. Some branches have augmented their files slightly with local entries that are not yet included in the official NIC file. One branch librarian felt that such augmentation was forbidden, and expressed the wish that it weren't. The development of the resource files at Detroit illustrates more than in any other NIC city the magnitude of the undertaking: the seemingly endless list of agencies that need to be contacted for the first time, and the need to pursue updating on a relentless schedule. After four years, and working with a staff of three to four people, several hundreds of candidate agencies have not been contacted, and the updating of existing entries (by phone) has fallen behind.

Administration

Since June 1973 NIC service has been system-wide, offered in all 29 branches and at the central library. The branch librarians are responsible for the service in their respective branches. They may delegate supervision of NIC activities to another person, and other branch staff are invariably involved in NIC work. At the central NIC, there is a distinct NIC staff of four people. The head of the central NIC answers directly to the Associate Director for Public Services.

Distinct from the central NIC is the NIC Clearinghouse, also housed in the central library. The Clearinghouse staff has primary responsibility for maintaining the data base that forms the resource files in the branches and at the central library, for initiating system-wide publicity, developing system-wide training programs, and for service back-up and consultation to the branches. The head of the Clearinghouse answers directly to the Associate Director for Public Services.

In a sense, the funded NIC project is a subset of Detroit's overall NIC activity (Formally, "TIP"). Since "TIP" has pervaded the Detroit Public Library system and appears to be relatively well entrenched, the three officially designated "NIC" branches have been charged with experimenting with new information services. Two of the three designated branches have staff paid for by federal NIC funds.

System-wide, the Assistant Directors for Branch Services carry responsibility for NIC activities. Before 1975, the Deputy Director held this responsibility.

Plans for the Immediate and Long-term Future

The future of Detroit's NIC is promising. That is, it will undoubtedly continue to exist and, moreover, to be an integral part of Detroit's library services, as long as the existing committed staff hold sway.

The DPL staff is currently engaged in a renewed publicity campaign. As well, branch files are being localized, so that each one includes some local entries that are unique to that branch's file.

A number of other ideas are being discussed. While there are no concrete plans for their implementation, the ideas may result in courses of action:

1. Adding staff at the central NIC and the Clearinghouse. In the latter, more staff would permit additional training of system personnel.

2. Integrating limited NIC service into each of the subject departments at the central library. There would undoubtedly still be a need for a distinct central NIC operation, in order to fill the subject gaps that naturally exist among the departments.

3. Considering a way to switch some of the intake load at the central library back to the branches, in order to distribute the load more evenly.

Evaluation

By and large Detroit's NIC operation is strongest among the five cities. It has served as a model for a number of public libraries that have moved in the direction of I & R service. Libraries both inside and outside the consortium have drawn on Detroit's experience in the development of their own NIC activities.

The only data that approximates a measure of impact on the target constituency -- the statistics of use, presented in the section on "Use and Users" -- indicate that Detroit has had far more impact than any of the other cities. Previous evaluators and the current evaluator have consistently observed a high level of integration of NIC service into existing library activities, and widespread acceptance and, frequently, enthusiasm for the concept.

What are the features that contribute to such success? At the present time we can only speculate on very limited data. It may be explained by Detroit's strength in all of the following areas. Other cities have substantial weaknesses in one or more areas.

1. Publicity has been vigorous and, for the first two years, sustained at a high level.

2. The resource file is uniform, widely distributed, and provides broad coverage.

3. Commitment to the new service emanated from the highest level of the library's administration, and the director continually reasserts the high-priority nature of NIC service. The commitment has been manifested in both spirit and physical resources. It has been made clear to the staff at all levels that NIC service is the highest service priority for the foreseeable future; and while top management has not reallocated the personnel, space and supplies of the system to reflect this priority to the extent of the spiritual commitment, it has done so to a substantial degree. It may be that top management's commitment to NIC service was all the more credible because it was demonstrated -- again, both in spirit and wherewithal -- well before the infusion of federal funds in July 1972. It was clear then, and continues to be more clear, that NIC service will be supported through regular funding sources.

4. It appears that a clearer, more consistent definition of NIC service pervades the staff of the Detroit Public Library than is the case in other cities. Except for those three branches that have been deliberately charged with experimenting, there seems to be a consistent idea of what NIC would be and how it should be delivered. This is doubtless attributable to the major effort during the early stages of the Project to orient the total system staff -- professional and clerical -- to the nature of NIC service and to keep them apprised of its development.

5. Branch operations are backed up by a strong Clearinghouse, which carries significant responsibility for publicity, file maintenance and training -- all of which are particularly strong elements in Detroit's experience.

6. The major service strength of the NIC lies in the central NIC service. Initial publicity made this a highly visible service point; and the administration wisely decided to staff it well. Consequently, it is a well known, high-volume operation, and its staff is likely the most expert in NIC service in the whole system.

It is natural to consider Detroit's success in light of the fact that it began NIC activities approximately 1-1/2 years before the other cities in the consortium. However, 1-1/2 years ago Detroit was administratively more successful and was attracting more users than

any of the other cities today. It seems that the 1-1/2 year head start does not completely explain Detroit's current level of achievement.

Comparatively, the weaknesses of Detroit's NIC program are minor. There is room to integrate the NIC concept even more deeply into existing services; there are staff who are still resistant to the idea either consciously or unconsciously. There is a need for additional publicity and a renewed training/orientation effort. Nonetheless, DPL remains the exemplar of I & R service in public libraries.

HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Service Objectives

The NIC concept of the Houston Public Library includes the primary objective of providing steering and referral for any problem or question that a citizen may have. In addition, a program component complements the steering and referral objective. Such events as Internal Revenue Service workshops and blood pressure tests have been offered in response to inquiries that arise through the NIC service or to needs that emerge during community contacts ("canvassing"). More loosely tied to the NIC objective is an experimental toy lending service coupled with a workshop on toys as educational tools. All such events, and particularly the last one, appear to be accepted as at least related to NIC activities; some staff do not view them as NIC services, per se, but rather as "regular" branch activities.

Intense social and personal counseling is not included in the NIC objectives. Advocacy is not a substantive objective of the service. Social reporting may occur incidentally (for instance, at the meeting of the city-wide Council of Information and Referral Services) but it is not an expressed purpose of the NIC service.

A limited amount of case-finding occurs in the process of "canvassing" the branch neighborhoods. Some escort service is provided, on the initiative of the concerned staff member. Translation services are provided in neighborhoods with large Spanish-speaking populations.

It appears that the major objective (steering and referral) is the commonly shared concept of what NIC is in Houston Public Library. The other NIC-related activities are less consistently viewed as NIC functions, and are not consistently engaged in from person to person or branch to branch. The service staff hold essentially the same view of NIC service as the administrative staff.

Sites

Currently, all branches operate as NIC's. The staff in each of these branches has received introductory training, and the resource files are on hand in each branch. Neighborhoods with NIC's range from primarily black, middle class (Kashmere Gardens) to affluent white (Hillendahl) to lower middle-class Spanish-speaking (Carnegie).

Community Involvement

There is virtually no formal community involvement in the NIC program, such as community advisory councils. An early attempt to bring the community together for a meeting on NIC service resulted in negligible attendance, and such efforts were abandoned. The primary community involvement is through contacts with community leaders.

Publicity

Publicity has included flyers, posters, library booths at shopping centers, radio and television spots*, short programs on the media, newspaper feature stories, and "canvassing." The latter consists of NIC branch staff going door to door in their neighborhoods, describing the services of the library, including the NIC, and occasionally initiating some I & R service at the same time. Obviously, considerable resources have been devoted to publicity over the history of Houston's NIC project. HPL has been fortunate to receive as a public service donation the talents of a local advertising firm, free.

NIC in the Context of Other Library Services

NIC services are currently seen and practiced as distinct from other library services. Some branches have designated staff members who are assigned major responsibility for NIC operation. These are the people who deal with the majority of NIC questions. Integration with other library services occurs to the extent that (1) the NIC service is provided from the regular reference desk, (2) some non-NIC staff do participate in community canvassing and gathering data for the local branch file, and (3) non-NIC staff do answer some NIC-type questions. The degree to which integration occurs varies from branch to branch. Naturally, the branch with stronger NIC commitment and where the NIC activities are shared more than sequestered exhibits closer integration of NIC with other services.

*The television spot has been a most successful one, and has attracted national attention from both the library and the news reporting communities.

Resistance to the NIC concept appears to be quite low. This may be owing to the strong endorsement of the idea from the top administration of HPL and from the mayor of Houston. In addition, there is a fairly widespread feeling among some branch staff that they were answering NIC-type questions before the program started, to some extent. There are undoubtedly some of the standard qualms about adopting NIC service on the part of some staff: canvassing the community can be fearsome to people who have not done it; there is frequently a reluctance to perform "social work," as opposed to "library work;" and the responsibility of making accurate referrals for personal problems may be seen as an added emotional burden.

Among the people interviewed, the NIC appears to be a very high priority service in the context of the total library program. At least half of the branch staff and virtually all of the top administrative staff interviewed indicated that they would prefer cuts in other services -- for example, children's services or program events -- over elimination of NIC activities. Throughout the system there seems to be strong endorsement of both the NIC concept and its current state of realization. Convincing evidence of this commitment on the part of both the library administration and the city government is the fact that all the designated NIC staff positions, including that of the Coordinator of the NIC Project, have been incorporated into the regular library budget.

Staffing

Responsibility for the NIC within the branch lies with the branch librarian. In branches with an "NIC Librarian," the branch librarian ordinarily delegates the majority of NIC operations to that "NIC" staff member. He or she is most frequently a person with a bachelor's degree and no formal library training. Each one has been through two days of NIC training under the direction of the NIC Project Coordinator.

All other staff in the system have been exposed to a half-day training session, in which the concept of the NIC was introduced and some of the techniques of the service were discussed.

Another activity of the NIC staff might be viewed as ongoing training: The Council of Information and Referral Services. This is a corps of agencies concerned with I & R work in the Houston area. It formed after a successful first meeting of such agencies, convened in 1972 by the administration of HPL. Through regular Council meetings, NIC staff expand their knowledge of the services and opportunities available to Houston's citizens.

Delivery of Service

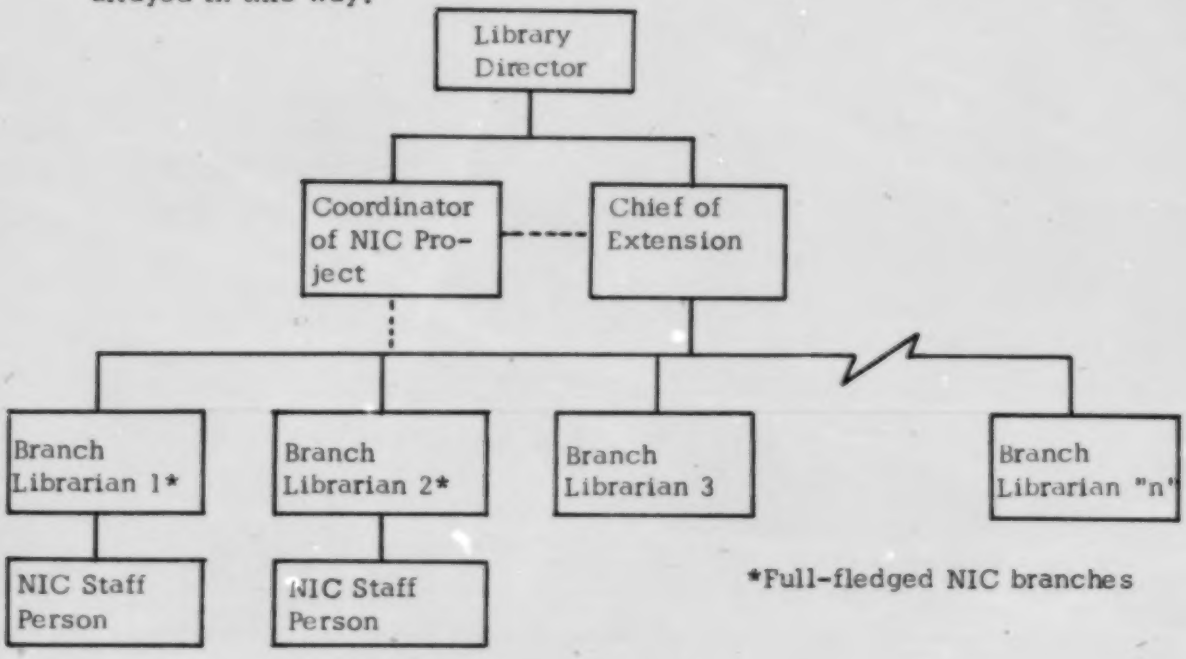
NIC service is delivered in all branches from the adult reference desk, by phone or in person. There are no facilities for three-way phone conversations. (Three-way hook-ups were tried for over two years, but received little use.) There are no special facilities for the client's privacy; existing offices and staff rooms are used if privacy appears warranted.

The major source from which the answers to NIC inquiries are drawn is the CWPA, or "green" manual: the Directory of Community Resources and Services, published by Houston's Community Welfare Planning Association. Updating information is issued monthly. A roladex file in each branch, containing entries on local community resources, was originally intended as a supplement to the CWPA manual. However, for those branches with a substantial number of community resource entries, the roladex file has supplanted the use of the CWPA manual to a large extent.

Another supplement to the roladex file and the CWPA manual is the bi-weekly NIC Newsletter. It includes updates on resource entries, short essays on information and information resources (such as what to do with a counterfeit bill), and news items related to information and adult education.

Administration

The channels of communication for the NIC Project in Houston are arrayed in this way:



A reasonable amount of horizontal communication exists among the NIC branch staff by virtue of joint attendance at meetings and the bi-weekly NIC Newsletter. More important to staff communication, however, is the recent establishment of a number of system-wide NIC committees: Information Gathering, Information Update, and Programming. It is the purpose of these committees to work toward stronger central support of various aspects of the NIC program. Coordinating the building of system-wide and local files is viewed by many as a high priority goal for these committees.

Activities on the Immediate Horizon

Some plans for the future of Houston's NIC's are quite concrete. First, there is the intention of placing an NIC-designed person in every branch. It seems desirable that, at least in the formative years, disintegration of library services should exist to the extent -- and only to the extent -- that the NIC program has designated staff. There is the possibility that the designation will be removed once NIC services are well established and have merged with the traditional library services.

Second, it is likely that a centralized NIC file will be developed in the near future. There is no existing blueprint for this eventuality. Its accomplishment will probably wait until the new central library building is completed, around December 1975, and an NIC office is established there.

Evaluation

Houston's strength is more potential than proven. While its NIC activities have not generated the flood of inquiries experienced by Detroit, the NIC program has been managed in such a way that the attitudes and organizational structures surrounding the NIC program augur well for a successful, high-impact future.

The auspicious "structures and attitudes" are evident in a number of areas:

1. A vigorous publicity campaign.

2. Strong system-wide commitment, issuing initially from the director and later from the mayor of Houston, and eventually reaching down to the service staff.

3. Strongly developing horizontal communication among the NIC service staff in the various branches of the system. This type of communication can be strengthened with the growth of centralized activities in the new main library building.

There are some areas for improvement. First, additional orientation and training of all staff, systemwide, would be valuable in integrating NIC activities into traditional library services. Second, it would be wise to consider a unified resource file, consisting of what is now the CWPA Manual and the roladex file. Any development along these lines, however, should await the initiation of NIC service at the central library.

Even with such minor weaknesses, it is likely, given the strong personal and financial commitment to the idea of NIC at all levels within the library, that I & R will continue to develop at Houston Public Library irrespective of external funding.

QUEENS BOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Service Objectives

The NIC service concept at Queens is the standard concept of public library I & R service, for the most part. The service is conceived of as directory-based steering and referral, designed to help citizens acquire information, counsel, services or activities from non-library resources in order to meet their everyday needs. As well, the NIC concept includes several tangent services that are not strictly I & R. One is the compilation of a limited job-availability roster, especially aimed at helping youths get summer jobs. Another is a municipal service function: issuing senior citizen reduced-fare cards for metropolitan transportation. (These cards are issued from every branch in the system.) The Queens service concept includes a limited amount of advocacy of the client's needs. As is the case in the other cities, intense social/personal counseling is not part of the concept; nor is social reporting, although one of the most successful NIC branches has done some social reporting upon request from an agency. The LSCA-funded Job Information Center project has been incorporated into the services of the nine NIC branches.

Occasionally program activity is closely tied to NIC activities. For instance, a flood of inquiries about filing income tax forms prompted a number of library-sponsored workshops on income tax computation; and in response to the rising number of requests for job information, branches have begun increasing their holdings of the Arco training manuals. In these ways, NIC inquiries themselves sometimes become input for decisions related to other library services. As might be guessed, such offshoots of NIC service are viewed ambivalently. Some staff see them as NIC activities; others see them as standard library services.

For the most part, though, the NIC concept at Queens was held consistently by most of the staff interviewed. There is a common idea of what "NIC" is and what purpose it is supposed to serve.

Sites

The two original NIC branches, East Elmhurst and South Jamaica, were located in quite different neighborhoods. East Elmhurst is a mix of white, black, Spanish, West Indian, East Indian and oriental of middle or lower-middle income. South Jamaica is an extremely depressed neighborhood of very low income blacks. Within the past year the service has been extended to six other branches and is just beginning in the central library. Amont the new branches is one that serves a relatively affluent middle-class community (Auburndale).

Community Involvement

There is very little formal effort to involve the community in the planning activities that surround NIC service. One community group that existed before the idea of NIC was born, the East Elmhurst Library Advisory Board, did sponsor an open house to launch that branch's NIC; that is the extent of community activity.

Publicity

Publicity to date has consisted of some newspaper feature stories, flyers, brochures, branch window displays, and community contacts made at the initiative of local branch personnel. A few features and announcements have been aired through the broadcast media; a few advertisements have been included in newspapers. Some attempt has been made to defray the cost of a substantial publicity campaign by seeking free assistance from advertising agencies. However, no such assistance has been found.

There is considerable agreement that publicity for the NIC has been inadequate from the beginning. It seems that this stems in part from some political opposition to the project and the library administration's consequent desire to remain unobtrusive until that opposition diminished. Additional factors that inhibited publicity are (1) lack of money for a substantial campaign, (2) inability to secure contributions of professional advertising talent, and (3) the fact that QBPL is but one of three library systems covered by the same broadcast media and newspapers in the New York metropolitan area, which thus complicates advertising a service that is limited to just one of those library systems.

NIC in the Context of Other Library Services

In Queens, the NIC is differentiated from other library services to the extent that (1) NIC services and classical reference services are provided from different desks, often at some distance from each other; (2) in some branches, one person may assume primary responsibility for answering NIC inquiries; (3) in each NIC branch there is a special phone line for NIC service. NIC activities are integrated with other library activities to the extent that most professional service staff are involved in one way or another with answering NIC inquiries.

By and large, the NIC is more differentiated from than integrated with other services of the library. That is, the NIC is most often seen as a unique, experimental, or alien kind of service, rather than as an extension of standard library services. NIC service is not viewed on a par with the classical library services (offering programs, answering reference questions through documents, providing materials for young children, providing materials for students, providing materials for light adult reading, providing materials for serious inquiry, and others). In one of the original NIC branches commitment to the idea of I & R is very strong, and the NIC is consequently considered a high priority service. The other branch staff and the central administrative personnel indicated, directly or indirectly, that NIC activities are generally at a lower priority than any of the other services. It was generally agreed that NIC service should continue, and that in the eventuality of a severe budget cut it would probably continue by being absorbed into traditional reference activities and would be forced to suffer a greatly diminished effectiveness. Reducing other library services in favor of NIC service was suggested in only the one branch mentioned above.

Staffing

NIC service within each branch is the responsibility of the branch librarian, who may delegate the job of day-to-day operations to another staff member. In the case of all but the two original NIC branches and the central library, the person to whom the majority of NIC operations is delegated is (naturally) the NIC Aide. The Aide is a resident of the branch's community, who works 17 hours a week maintaining the files, contacting community resources and, usually, answering NIC questions. In most branches the Aide answers the majority of NIC questions; however, in one branch the Aide answers very few, and the majority are left to the librarians. Aides range in background from clerks to trained social case workers. The skills of the regular branch personnel are available to supplement those of the Aides. In each of the two original NIC branches, where there are

not Aides, as such, there is at least one staff member who has extensive experience with the NIC project.

The primary formal training has occurred through a series of introductory workshops on the concepts, files and techniques associated with NIC service. Everyone in the library system, including clerical staff, has been urged to attend. There is no ongoing formal training for either NIC or non-NIC staff. However, periodic meetings are held, in which various social services are reviewed by outside experts. As well, NIC staff visit other agencies for both formal training and informal observation, on occasion.

Delivery of Service

All but the central NIC are designed as both a walk-in and telephone service. Straight phone facilities are used; that is, there is no three-way hook-up capacity. All NIC's provide service from a desk that is distinct from other service points in the library outlet. In the branches visited, there are no special arrangements to insure privacy for the walk-in client. Staff rooms and offices can be used for private discussions. In the abstract, Queens' NIC's are founded on IRMA (Information and Referral Manual), a microfiche directory of resources in greater New York City. IRMA, copyrighted in 1973, is disseminated by the office of the mayor of New York City. In reality, IRMA is rarely or never used by NIC staff, for a number of reasons: (1) "they seem to have left Queens out," (2) it is out of date, and (3) it is sometimes considered hard to use because of its complicated arrangement and indexing, and its unusual and cumbersome format (microfiche).

The resource files that were originally intended to supplement IRMA constitute, in fact, the real foundation for the service. These files are: a community resource file on cards, developed by each branch; directories published by non-library agencies, such as Call for Action, prepared by WMCA radio station; the telephone book; and others. The resources from which NIC questions are answered vary from branch to branch; the development of these resources is left primarily to individual branch initiative. Likewise, each branch is responsible for updating its own resource card file. Updating, when done, is accomplished primarily by telephone. There appears to be no regimen for updating.

The inadequacies of the current resource files are among the major problems expressed by NIC staff.

Administration

The Chief of the Extension Services Department (Branch System) oversees the NIC activities of the Queens Borough Public Library. The regional librarians carry responsibility for the implementation of the NIC program within their own regions. This responsibility includes staff training and file development, among others. The regional librarian is the one to whom the branch librarian turns most often when he or she has an NIC-related problem.

A substantial part of the time of several top administrators (Chief of the Extension Division, the Assistant Chief and the regional librarians) is devoted to NIC functions. The prominence of these staff members and the visibility of their activities probably lends some validity to the whole NIC undertaking in the eyes of the branch staff.

Further anchoring NIC service in the system is the fact that the branch librarians in NIC branches are given firm responsibility for the success of NIC operations in their respective branches.

Activities on the Immediate Horizon

There is some movement toward maintaining a master file of all community resource agencies at the central branch, and to make the central branch a sort of clearinghouse for the other NIC's. The prospective "clearinghouse" would have fewer systemwide responsibilities and less strength than Detroit's.

There are concrete plans to provide an NIC desk at the central branch, so that NIC service can be provided on a walk-in basis.

A related project, the "Media Information and Referral" program at the Langston Hughes branch, is expected to reinforce the NIC concept in the library system. This new project is intended to record news, history, and events of the community on some form of audio-visual medium, such as videotape.

Plans for the More Distant Future

Funds are being sought to undertake a study of the feasibility of computerizing the IRMA file.

There is some interest in designing a special desk that will allow traditional reference services and NIC services to be combined at one of the most successful NIC branches.

At a somewhat more advanced stage of planning is a proposal for funds to develop some information kiosks, possibly to be located at strategic

entry points to Queens. Such kiosks would not provide all NIC-type services; rather, they would complement the NIC's with information on travel routes, community events, and a hotline to the library information services.

Currently there are no concrete plans for increased publicity.

While there is a feeling on the part of some of the library's top administration that the NIC concept should be extended to all branches, at the moment there is no timetable for such expansion.

Evaluation

The major strength of the NIC program at Queens Borough Public Library is that a considerable amount of energy of the top managers is being devoted to the service. Even so, the endorsement of the NIC from the library's highest administrators is not as vigorous as it could be. This may be explained by several circumstances: (1) NIC service is not seen as an overriding priority among QBPL's many services; (2) the original promoter of the NIC proposal and former director of QBPL, Harold Tucker, died well before the project was under way; (3) the current director is relatively new to the job; and (4) the library is in the midst of severe financial difficulties, making new ventures appear more than normally risky.

Other areas are in need of attention, if NIC service is to be made a vigorous feature of QBPL. First, considerable work is needed on the resource file(s). It is reasonable that the system should rely less on directories that are produced for the greater New York region (IRMA) and more on files that are compiled at the local branch and the Queens-area levels. This indicates the need for a serious data-collection effort by the QBPL staff.

Second, publicity needs to be stepped up appreciably. Whatever the cause, the lack of adequate publicity is antithetical to the introduction of a new service, and particularly a service that is being directed to library non-users.

Third, communication and cooperation among the branches needs improvement. NIC service in the individual branches would be strengthened if there were more opportunities for the staff of the various branches to share their NIC problems, their resources and their skills.

Fourth, additional system-wide promotion of the NIC spirit and training in the skills and resources related to NIC service appear to be needed. Such an effort would serve to emphasize the importance of

NIC work and would bring even more proficiency and consistency to NIC activities from branch to branch. Moreover, renewed training and promotion will be essential before NIC services can spread to the remaining branches. The need in this area is clear to QBPL staff; already plans are under way to engage library educators in a comprehensive training effort in 1975-76.

VI. USE AND USERS OF THE NIC'S

Use

The five cities were asked to supply data on the number of NIC inquiries received from October 1974 through March 1975. However, for one reason or another, the statistics actually delivered were irregular in their coverage. Still, they offer a general, if sketchy, view. Through selective use of those statistics, we may draw a more or less impressionistic picture of the intensity of NIC activity in the cities.

The number of "NIC" queries received ranged from a high of more than 8000 in Detroit, system-wide, in April, to a low of 75 in Cleveland, system-wide, in March.

Houston, without a central NIC operation, reached 661 in February. The number of queries received by a branch ranged from 0 (in nine branches) to 306. The mean number of queries per branch for the month of February was 28. Queens' February intake, by branch, ranged from 8 to 72, with a mean of 41 per branch.

Atlanta achieved close to 5000 inquiries per month in the first three months of 1975. This city serves, however, as an excellent example of one widespread problem associated with statistical reporting for this project in particular and for reference/information services in general. Specifically, Atlanta includes in the figures the statistics for its Telephone Ready Reference Department. Examining just a few of those requests reveals that the queries being received there are quite often "standard" reference questions, of the kind that have been dealt with by public libraries for decades.

It is clear that traditional reference questions are being tallied in with the statistics of NIC service in all five cities, and vice versa. Without a more intensive investigation, we cannot be sure of the extent of the problem; but we can be sure that it obscures our vision of NIC activity. In the case of Atlanta, the Telephone Ready Reference statistics accounted for over two-thirds of the "NIC" count for the period of January-March 1975. We do not know how much of the total statistic constitutes essentially new intake for the library.

There are several explanations for this problem. First, it may be difficult -- perhaps impossible -- for librarians to distinguish true NIC queries from standard reference queries. Second, the client has an even harder time separating NIC and traditional queries. (Advertising NIC service tends to bring in a substantial number of standard questions.) Third, many libraries had been responding to

NIC-type demands long before the project began. Ordinarily this was a function of an individual librarian's initiative; and it most often meant that the librarian engaged in ad hoc data-gathering for each query, as it was received.

Another problem associated with statistics is that the five cities all used unique schemes for classifying their NIC intake. Comparison of the subjects of inquiries from city to city was thus thwarted. Study along this line would be well warranted, in order to identify topics of most frequent inquiry and to associate those topics with standard demographic variables.

The most significant statistic for the sake of evaluating the NIC experience is produced by Detroit's central unit. Unlike all other operations in Detroit and the other cities, Detroit's central NIC is completely distinct from standard reference or information activities at the branches or at the central library. Even though some "traditional" queries are tallied in with the NIC statistics, the figures generated by the central NIC operation can tell us something about the potential of NIC service. In short, those figures hold great promise: the central NIC desk currently takes in over 7000 queries per month -- far and away the bulk of NIC queries for the whole Detroit system. Even those figures are not pure, though; included are an unknown number of standard reference questions that had to be transferred elsewhere in the system to be answered.

What can be known from the statistics of use in the five cities is relatively little:

1. A substantial number of NIC-type queries can be elicited from a large urban population, possibly as many as one query per month for every 250 persons.*

2. The public library appears capable of overcoming the prevailing image of a materials-distributor, and of effectively promoting itself as a distributor of information.

Considering the exploratory nature of this project, a substantive attempt to coordinate the collection of data about use would have been very desirable. Such a simple thing as maintaining a uniform scheme by which to classify the subjects of the NIC queries would have been of immense value to our level of understanding. It would have aided future I & R efforts to attempt to clarify the difference between NIC and standard reference queries, and to count each type separately. The

*Based on a Detroit population of 1.5 million.

responsibility for coordinating data collection should probably have gone to the city that originally served as the national coordinator, Cleveland. It is hoped that in future exploratory ventures, the Division of Library Programs will exert more pressure on the principal investigators to generate data that will advance our understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Lacking such data, what can be drawn from the NIC Project is a very tentative kind of knowledge, at best. With proper attention to a small amount of systematic, coordinated data collection, what we "know" about I & R in libraries could have progressed substantially further.

Users

The five cities were asked to conduct brief interviews of their NIC clients over a two-week period in late March and early April. They were to interview every second NIC client in every branch that was offering I & R services at the time. The interview form is reproduced in Appendix B.

In actuality, data collection proceeded in a rather more irregular manner. The period of the survey turned out to be much shorter in some branches than in others. A busy branch might interview every fourth client, while a branch that hardly ever received an NIC query would interview every client. On occasion a branch's staff would refuse to ask a certain question (for instance, age or education).

These are serious shortcomings. They threaten our confidence in the data, as they should. However, the total number of responses is large enough that, provided we do not go beyond simple tabulations, they will afford a rough perspective on NIC users, aggregated for the five cities. We shall go somewhat beyond that, too, to observations on the individual cities, with the understanding that these observations are very tentative.

A total of 580 useable interviews were completed in all five cities. This represents approximately 17% of all clients who received NIC service during the survey period, or 3395 clients. Six percent of the clients who were approached for an interview refused to respond.

Findings

The responses for all cities are as follows:*

*Percents equal percent of those responding to that question, unless otherwise noted.

1. Have you yourself ever used the NIC service before?
   Yes: 205 (36%)
   No: 319 (57%)
   Don't remember: 38 (7%)

2. Have you yourself ever used this public library or its branches, other than for NIC service?
   Yes: 408 (73%) Within last 6 months: 269 (48%)
   Within last year: 333 (60%)
   No: 128 (23%)
   Don't remember: 21 (4%)

3. Where did you first hear of the NIC service?

Friend, neighbor, relative:	103 (20%)
Radio:	44 (9%)
Television:	26 (5%)
Newspaper:	27 (5%)
Referred by an agency:	38 (8%)
NIC personnel:	107 (21%)
NIC printed materials:	107 (21%)
Other, including Don't remember:	53 (10%)

4. Do you live in the (branch location) area?
   Yes: 390 (67%)
   No: 190 (33%)

5. How many clubs or other groups do you belong to?

Zero clubs:	292 (53%)
One club:	89 (16%)
Two clubs:	73 (13%)
Three clubs:	45 (8%)
Four clubs:	21 (4%)
Five clubs:	10 (2%)
More than five:	17 (3%)

(Mean number of clubs: 1.1 per respondent.)

6. How old are you?

Under 19:	42 (8%)
19-34:	244 (44%)
35-44	133 (24%)
45 and over:	138 (25%)

7. What was the last year of school you completed?

Grades 1-6:	17 (4%)
Grades 7-9:	49 (11%)
Grades 10-12:	218 (48%)
Some college:	174 (38%)

8. Male: 187 (35%)
Female: 352 (65%)

Below are major observations that can be ventured on the user data. Since the number of responses from Cleveland were so few (14), Cleveland will not be discussed individually.

About 57% of the people interviewed said they had never used NIC services before. In Houston and Queens, however, the percentages rise substantially, to 82 and 70%, respectively.

Seventy-three percent claim they have used the public library before -- 60% within the last year, and almost 50% within the last six months. Using either once-a-year or once-in-six-months as a criterion for defining "active" user, it appears that a solid half of those interviewed are "active" library users, and close to half are not active users. One of the charges of the NIC Project was to serve non-user groups. It appears that the libraries have achieved some success along this line. The roughly fifty-fifty mix of users with non-users may, in fact, be a desirable ratio. It evidences that new populations and current user groups can both be drawn to this unique service. It may be possible for libraries to find support in new quarters without relinquishing the support of their traditional clientele.

It is quite interesting that the two cities with the strongest publicity campaigns and the most vital NIC service attracted much more than the average percentage of non-users. Detroit and Houston drew 14 and 15% more non-users than any other city. Putting it another way, they attracted the least number of people who had used the library within the last year -- 16 to 18% fewer than the next closest city. This statistic could be a testament either to the level of service that those two cities are offering, or to their publicity campaigns.

NIC users first heard of the service through friends, neighbors, relatives, NIC staff and NIC printed materials. The impact of the various means of publicity varies considerably from city to city, yet the data may not be robust enough to support many fine observations. However, it could be noted that in Detroit more than twice as many people heard about the NIC through the newspaper as in any other city; in Houston, radio had twice as much impact as in any other city; in Atlanta users were referred by an agency to the NIC about three times as often as in other cities. It is curious that, in Houston, as in other cities, the impact of television has not been strong, despite the fact that Houston launched what is generally considered to have been a very successful publicity effort through television. The relatively low impact of television even in Houston may be due to the fact that the television publicity occurred long before the time of the survey and its effect may have worn off.

Over half the users claimed they lived in the locality of the branch to which they took their NIC inquiry. Detroit drove this average down, however. This could probably be attributed to the strong drawing power of Detroit's central NIC outlet, which processes the vast bulk of the whole system's inquiries, and serves people who call in and walk in from all over the metropolitan area.

The literature of social science research continually attests to the strong relationship between an individual's membership in organizations and the extent to which he is an opinion leader, information gatekeeper, or community leader. The question on club and organization memberships was included in an effort to get a very rough idea of whether NIC users can be expected to be playing an information role in their communities, thus extending the impact of NIC service.

The number of organizational memberships held by the average NIC user is 1.1. Forty-seven percent affiliate with one or more organizations. Babchuck, in a study of the general adult population of a midwest state, found that 80% of the sample affiliated with one or more organizations.[8] While we cannot reach firm conclusions by comparing a sample from a whole state with samples from five large cities, we do have some reason to believe that the NIC's are not reaching a higher than average percentage of community leaders, and that the NIC users are seeking information or help on behalf of themselves, their friends and family, rather than on behalf of their general communities.

The age of the average NIC user is approximately 37 years. The pattern is fairly consistent from city to city. The greatest use occurs by people in the 19-34 age group; few teens and few people over 45 avail themselves of NIC services. The figures are very close to Singer's findings at an I & R center in London, Ontario.[9]

The education of the average NIC user is 12.5 years. Houston is somewhat below the average (11+ years). This may be a function of Houston's appeal to non-users. (See the discussion above about non-use of the library.) Typically, non-users have less education. Again, these data are reinforced by Singer's findings.[10]

The proportion of male to female NIC users holds relatively constant throughout all five cities (7:13 for all cities). It is almost identical to the findings of Singer's study.[11] The skew in use, by sex, is in the same direction as general public library use, as reported in numerous studies over the years. To this extent the NIC's are not creating new patterns of use.

VII. RESOURCE AGENCIES AND THE NIC'S

In an attempt to get some perspective on the NIC's place in the urban community a very small number of agencies (dispensers) from the NIC resource files were questioned by mail. Each city was asked to draw a systematic sample of 20 agencies from its resource file. The questionnaire and cover letter reproduced in Appendix C were then sent out, in late March and early April 1975. Several cities sent out more than 20; even so, the size of the sample is so small that it precludes making any firm observations. Moreover, the small sample size mitigates against making even tentative observations about individual cities. The most that can be expected from a sample of this size is to develop areas for future inquiries. Over the five cities, a total of 110 questionnaires was sent out; 58, or 53%, were returned completed.

Findings

Below are reported the findings that have some tentative significance, along with areas for further study.

When asked is there a general I & R service available to the citizens in their own city, 85% of those responding said Yes. Very often the respondent did not specify the name of the service, and those who did evidenced few patterns. Several respondents in Cleveland mentioned the Community Information Service; in Atlanta, the United Way Information and Referral Service; and in Houston, the Community Welfare Planning Association.

Of those who answered the question about what kind of agency would be the most appropriate in the role of a general I & R center, 63% mentioned a non-library agency by name (sometimes naming themselves). The public library was mentioned 7% of the time, despite the fact that the questionnaire obviously pertained to libraries.

In response to "Have you ever received an information request or referral from the public library," answers were fairly evenly divided. Thirty-six percent said Yes; 40% said No; 24% said they didn't know.

The 36% answering Yes were asked to judge the effectiveness of those public library requests and referrals, on a scale of 1 to 5. The median response was almost dead-center, just slightly less than 3. About as many respondents thought the library's contacts with them were effective, as the thought they were ineffective.

The agencies were asked if their public library had a formal I & R service for public use. The vast majority, 62%, said No or Don't

know. Thirty-eight percent said Yes. About 1/4 of those who claimed the public library did offer I & R could approximate the name for it. Seventy-seven percent entered no name, or a clearly erroneous one. (Detroit respondents accounted for all but one naming.)

On the last question, they were asked if they thought the public library's role in I & R should be expanded, maintained at current level, curtailed, or eliminated. Of those responding, 76% thought the role of the library's I & R should be expanded, 20% thought it should be maintained at the current level, 0% thought it should be curtailed, and 6% thought it should be eliminated.

Tentative Conclusions and Area for Study

From these very preliminary data, we can advance several hypothetical statements that would be worthy of further investigation.

While resource agencies claim that general I & R service is available to their citizens, there is little agreement as to where it is to be found. This may mean (1) that there is no effective general I & R service, (2) that there is inadequate promotion of the existing general I & R service, or (3) that there are a number of competing general I & R services.

The agencies queried overwhelmingly view non-library organizations as the most appropriate providers of general I & R service; and usually they favor organizations that are already in existence, many of which have at least some I & R function already.

Public library requests for information or referral are not noted for their effectiveness.

Either the majority of respondents do not know of the NIC Project in their city, or they do not see it as an I & R function. In addition, of those who do appear to know that there is such a service, few know it so well that they can name it with any accuracy.

The agencies appear to welcome the library into the I & R business; yet -- going back to question 3 -- they may not consider the library as the most logical site for the omnibus I & R service for their citizens. If libraries do in fact aspire to be the primary general I & R center in the municipality, they may face considerable -- even if veiled -- resistance.

It is almost a certainty that knowledge about I & R services and the public library's activities could vary from person to person within each agency that received a questionnaire. This must be seen as a

limitation of the agency data; had other persons answered the questionnaire, the results might have been different.

VIII. WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THE NIC PROJECT?

The Value of the Project

The Office of Education's funding of a five-city consortium of public libraries had several advantages. First, federal funds undoubtedly prompted the inception of I & R services in several of the cities, such as Atlanta and Houston. In other cities -- Detroit, perhaps Queens -- the federal funds provided extra support for a service that had either already begun or was fairly certain to begin in the near future. It is clear that in those cities where NIC activities were pursued most vigorously -- for example, Houston and Detroit -- the federal funds defrayed only part of the expenses associated with providing I & R services.

Second, the project has made the five cities' attempts at I & R service highly visible to the whole professional library community.

Third, by joining the five cities in a consortium, the project has facilitated the exchange of ideas and information about the I & R enterprise from city to city. This has also offered an opportunity to make limited comparisons of the cities.

In one import respect, though, the project might have been strengthened. As pointed out by Franklin and Summers, "Description, even when conducted by careful, skilled and concerned persons, cannot replace objective measurements of results achieved, compared to outcomes intended."[12] It is abundantly clear that the project was conceived as a series of demonstrations and not as an effort to develop firm understandings of I & R services in a public library setting. The looseness of the consortium almost precluded any substantial research effort. The administration of the consortium was laissez-faire from the outset. The national coordinators could exert no control over the substance of NIC activities in the various cities; hence, there were often no common grounds on which to compare cities. Similarly, control over statistics collection at the national level was ineffective, to the point that simple statistics of use collected by each city are not comparable. That is, in many ways we lack even a good description of what occurred in the project, to say nothing of more complex data about the relationships among important variables in the NIC experience. Had there been a clearer articulation of data needs and a stronger enforcement of the research component of the project, much more could have been learned.

Emerging Lessons about I & R in Public Libraries

The lessons to be learned from the five cities' experiences are speculative for the most part. This is certainly not to say that the project

has been valueless. As pointed out above, the project has made some important contributions to the development of public librarianship. In addition, even though the research element in the project has not been strong, the efforts of the five cities do allow some tentative generalizations about public libraries and I & R service:

1. The nature of I & R in the public library is most likely going to be different from I & R in a social service agency, inasmuch as the library incorporates less personal counseling and advice into its activities. It is also probable that the library's primary orientation will be the delivery of accurate information/referrals (in contrast to the social service agency's orientation toward the ultimate delivery of a service or commodity). This orientation could result in less aggressive follow-through and follow-up on the part of library I & R staff.

2. The public will respond to public library I & R service in great numbers, if the right situation exists. Detroit, where the library is processing about 100,000 inquiries a year, is the clearest example of such success.

3. I & R can be introduced into the library without committing new money to the effort. It does, however, require that some personnel resources and some space be earmarked for I & R service. Detroit's experience indicates that, in a large city, between three and five full time persons may be needed to oversee file maintenance, training, and publicity. In addition, four or five full time persons might be kept busy with the additional queries generated by a vital publicity campaign. It is obvious that the library system must either have sufficient slack to absorb the additional I & R operations or must be willing to reduce its level of activity in another service area.

4. It may not be reasonable to expect a public library to restructure its priorities to the extent that an established service would be replaced with I & R service. The NIC venture indicated that only a few librarians were willing to entertain this possibility seriously; and even among those who were favorable toward rearranging priorities there was no evidence of diminished activity in traditional services.

5. I & R service can attract substantial "new" audiences to the public library. Moreover, I & R can serve affluent middle-class citizens as well as the disadvantaged.

6. Funding authorities may find I & R an attractive way to spend public money. This might be especially true, to the extent that the I & R service has a large clientele drawn from library users and non-users alike.

7. There is probably a natural resistance to public library I & R service on the part of (1) competing I & R services and (2) dispensers who are afraid the library will encroach on their domain. The NIC project, however, indicates that the library can establish positive, mutually beneficial relationships with such agencies. This is more likely to come about when it is realized that the market for I & R in a large city is very large, that the library serves more as a directory than as a counseling service, and that the library's service covers a broader range of topics.

8. All the tentative lessons above, as well as the arguments in chapter II, lead us to speculate that the public library can, indeed, be a natural site for I & R services. Whether or not the public library succeeds in the venture is due to a number of factors internal and external to the library. Several of those factors are introduced below.

9. It appears that the following elements are among those that spell success for a public library's I & R enterprise.

a. Commitment from the top of the organization. It must be strong, and it must be continually renewed. It must be manifested administratively (by rearranging priorities, by perpetually advocating I & R) and financially (by devoting staff time, supplies and space to the new service). I & R in public libraries "cannot be done successfully without a sizeable commitment of resources. It is a mistake to begin it unless the commitment is strong enough that it is likely to be continued in lean times, when to do so would mean perhaps retrenchment elsewhere in the library's program."[13] It is interesting to note -- even though it may be coincidental -- that the two libraries that were most successful in the project (Houston and Detroit) were also the only two libraries that enjoyed a consistently high level of support from the top managers throughout the project. The other three libraries were all troubled by one sort of administrative upset or other in the course of the project: one director resigned in the midst of an uproar of the public and trustees, another died suddenly, and still another went on a year's leave of absence. It seems that persistent, visible, purposeful direction from the top is a critical element for successful introduction of I & R.

b. A vigorous publicity campaign, renewed occasionally. This will be necessary in part to overcome the prevailing public image of the library as a materials-dissemination center. The two cities with the strongest publicity campaigns -- Detroit and Houston -- have experienced immediate public response. Data collected for this report show that these two cities enjoy a

greater frequency of use and have attracted a greater percent of library non-users than the other three cities. This may be a result of strong publicity. The impression from the staff of Detroit and Houston is that the broadcast media are most effective in advertising I & R. The data for this study, however, leave room for considerable doubt.

c. Integration of the service. This is achieved along several dimensions: by using the regular service staff to provide I & R service and to maintain the resource files; by providing I & R service from the existing service points within the library; by offering I & R service at every branch in the system; by orienting every member of the library staff to the nature and techniques of I & R, whether or not they will be directly involved with it or not.

d. Positive relations with other I & R services and with dispensers.

e. Awareness of the problems of introducing change. I & R service can reasonably be viewed as a substantial change in the direction of a library's program, and a change of such magnitude carries a substantial personal threat along with it. It will be important to give careful consideration to the introduction of I & R.

10. While it appears to be very important for the I & R staff to establish close relationships with their communities, the means of establishing adequate contact is variable. With some degree of success, the following kinds of contact have been demonstrated in the project: door-to-door canvassing of residents, door-to-door contact with businesses and services in the major commercial areas, and attending regular meetings of formal groups, such as a junior chamber of commerce, a civic improvement association, or a parent-teacher organization.

Even though stated in the original proposal as a significant element of the project, the establishment of community groups expressly for the purpose of providing input to the I & R service has been rare in any of the five cities. The existence of a community advice group does not appear to be essential to the success of a public library's I & R effort, as long as other strong community contact exists. In fact, the "community advisory group" approach could be seen as an expedient and less than adequate substitute for an attempt to reach a broader base of the constituency. As well, several NIC participants stated that the existing community groups provide adequate forums for presenting the NIC concept and getting community feedback.

11. The public library might reasonably assume the role of convenor of all I & R agencies in a given metropolitan area. Houston took the initiative of calling together all such agencies merely to begin sharing experiences. Since that first meeting, the agencies have formed a loose but formal council of information and referral agencies, whose major purpose has been to facilitate the development of improved overall I & R service for Houston's citizens.

It is important to reiterate that THE "EMERGING LESSONS" ABOVE ARE JUST THAT. They can be taken more or less as hypotheses in need of testing. None of them should be accepted without additional scrutiny.

The Future of I & R in the Public Library

I & R has been an occasional facet of public library activities over the past several decades (for example, the war information service of Detroit Public Library during World War II). The recent reintroduction of I & R is a rare occurrence, however, by virtue of its scale. It is inherently a unique addition to the public library's repertoire; it is even seen by some as a radical departure from the library's rightful role. Yet significantly, reports in the current library literature indicate that the I & R movement is gaining momentum. It is obvious that the idea of I & R is attracting more and more attention in the world of public libraries.

Librarianship has long been characterized by the lack of a substantial body of research or empirically derived theory. Our beginnings in I & R -- witness the NIC project -- do not betray that legacy. Among researchers and academics, it is almost commonplace to urge that an impending innovation in any field be accompanied by appropriate data collection and research efforts. So too, many people in the field of librarianship, including this writer, insist that the practice of I & R in libraries would be considerably enhanced by a useable body of empirical data.

Below are some needs related to expanding our understanding of I & R in public libraries. All of them depend upon the collection of data. All of them are intended to provide a sounder base for decision making. It would be most appropriate that these efforts be undertaken at the state or national levels in order to produce the most generalizable results.

One of the simplest data to collect is the mere description of I & R operations, in numerical form. If we are ultimately to arrive at descriptions that permit comparison of one I & R operation with another, it will be necessary to regularize the scales by which their

elements are measured. This means that it will be necessary to move toward uniform definitions and taxonomies, so that the scales of measurement are consistent. An equally important, but considerably more complex, method is controlled field experimentation (as opposed to mere demonstration), with carefully controlled application of a variety of techniques, staffing patterns, administrative approaches, etc., in order to determine the most efficient configuration for effective service delivery.

Among others, there is a pressing need to investigate on a systematic basis, either through simple description or field experimentation:

1. Optimum file arrangement and access. For instance, it is possible to index a resource (dispenser) by virtue of the service it offers or the problem it solves. Which of these is most appropriate to a successful I & R service?

2. Format of the resource file. Resource files have existed in printed, microfiche, 3 x 5 card and automated forms. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these various formats, singly or in combination?

3. The inquiry. Very little is known about the nature of the demands on public library I & R services. One of the first questions to ask is how the topics of inquiry relate to standard demographic variables such as age, sex, income level, education, and occupation. Beyond that, we need to determine how the nature of the I & R transaction varies from population to population: What are the demands for referral as opposed to simple steering? What is the relative speed of the transaction from group to group? What language or interpretive skills are needed? What kind of counseling occurs -- or does not occur -- in various populations?

4. Response of the service staff. Levels of service vary from transaction to transaction. Knowledge about discrepancies between service policy and service delivery, about the exact nature of the question negotiation, steering, referral and counseling processes, and about the techniques used in contacting resource agencies will contribute to sounder decision making related to goal and policy formation, staffing, budgeting, training and orientation of staff. It would be particularly valuable to view the I & R services as a client might encounter them. Unobtrusive methods already applied to standard library telephone information service offer a straightforward methodology for achieving such a vantage point.[14]

5. Costs of I & R service. Unfortunately, the NIC experience did not yield useable cost figures. In large part this was due to the

rather complex integration of I & R into other library activities -- and to the fact that few NIC resources were spent on such investigation. To arrive at accurate cost figures it would be necessary to engage in rather complicated cost accounting procedures and interviews of staff. Perhaps more than any other facet of I & R, costs will be an important element in the decision of whether to initiate I & R service, or not.

6. The impact of various forms of publicity. It is clear that each form of publicity has its own peculiar impact. Data of impact compared with the costs of each form will result in cost-benefit data that will facilitate decision making.

7. Administrative configurations. I & R service can be introduced into a library system in a number of ways ranging from participative to autocratic, system-wide or branch-by-branch, authorized from the highest levels or founded on grass-roots support. As well, I & R can be administered in a variety of styles, from laissez-faire to authoritarian, from centralized to branch-based, from closely supervised to generally supervised, from clearly delegated to vaguely delegated, from highly integrated to unintegrated. The facets that could be studied are almost limitless, and the findings would provide a valuable basis for decisions related to managing I & R services in public libraries.

APPENDIX A

VISITS TO THE FIVE CITIES

Atlanta. Sites visited: Sandy Springs, South, Inman, Kirkwood, Government Information Center (Central Library), Neighborhood Information Center (Central Library).

Persons interviewed: Carlton C. Rochell, director; Frank Young, social planner; Mary Louise Rheay, assistant director; Ella G. Yates, administrative coordinator; Polly Jones, regional director; Nancy Keever, Bobby Henderson, Carolyn Lowe, Vann Roberts, branch librarians; Martha Mashburn, head of Goernment Information Center; Cheryl Grace, in charge of NIC Central; Brenda Hunter, librarian; Dave Norman, director of planning, Department of Community and Human Development, City of Atlanta.

Cleveland. Sites visited: Central, Jefferson, Martin Luther King, Langston Hughes, Eastman.

Persons interviewed: Ervin J. Gaines, director; Virginia C. Grady, branch librarian; Martha Bright, assistant branch librarian; Clara E. Lucioli, director of professional services; Ruth Baldwin, volunteer social worker; Robert W. Vokes, NIC librarian; Catharine Graves, head of branches; Rosemary Feighan, Ruth B. Walker, acting branch librarians; James E. Rogers, director of urban services (and formerly in charge of NIC activities).

Detroit. Sites visited: Bowen, Central TIP, TIP Clearinghouse; branch staff from these branches interviewed at Central: Gray, Chaney, Chandler Park, Lincoln.

Persons interviewed: Clara S. Jones, director; Florence Tucker, research and grants coordinator; Pat Smee, Marcia Allen, Dorothy Baker, William Cline, branch librarians; Lorene Royster, TIP Clearinghouse librarian; James Evenhuis, head of TIP Clearinghouse and formerly branch librarian; Norman Maas, in charge of TIP Central; Teresa Jones, TIP Central librarian.

Houston. Sites visited: Moody, Carnegie, Ring, Hillendahl, Kashmere Gardens.

Persons interviewed: David Henington, director; Len Radoff, chief of extension; Ann Hornak, assistant director; Guadalupe Mier, NIC coordinator; Sammie Bentley, John Shirk, John Shults, Lou Caldwell, Gail Carstens, branch librarians; Judi Lutz,

Agelia Perez, Norma Herrera, Mary Beth Hansell, Esther Trevino, NIC branch staff members.

Queens. Sites visited: Central, Broadway, Lefrack, East Elmhurst, South Jamaica.

Persons interviewed: Milton S. Byam, director; Samual A. Lacey, chief of extension services department; Jewel Nicholson, regional librarian; Joan Cole, Sunil Banerjee, branch librarians; Rosemarie Falanga, young adult librarian; Erica Bernstein, general assistant; Dorothy Puryear, librarian-trainee; Rose Guttila, Ruth Gluck, information aides.

APPENDIX B

NIC USER INTERVIEW FORM

1. Have you yourself ever used the NIC service before?
   ___Y ___N ___Don't remember
2. Have you yourself ever used this public library or its branches, other than for NIC service? ___Y
   a. Within the last 6 months? ___N ___Y (go to q.3)
   b. Within the last year? ___N ___Y (go to q.3)
   c. Don't remember ___
3. Where did you first hear of the NIC service?
   ___Friend, neighbor, relative ___NIC personnel
   ___Radio ___television ___newspaper ___NIC printed materials
   ___Referred by an agency ___Other:_____
4. Do you live in the (branch location) area? ___Y ___N
5. How many clubs or other groups do you belong to? _____
6. How old were you on your last birthday? _____
7. What was the last year of school you completed?
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Fr So Ju Se Grad

(8. Interviewer ascertain: ___Male ___Female)

___Refused to be interviewed

tc.3/75

APPENDIX C

USER INTERVIEWS

Use the interview form in all branches currently offering NIC service. Use it for a period of two weeks (Sunday through Saturday) in late March and early April. Please return the data to me by the 15th of April. When all the data have been collected, tabulate them on the Summary Sheet, for each branch, and send the Summary Sheets to me: Dr. Thomas Childers, Graduate School of Library Science, Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Instructions to NIC Staff for Conducting User Interviews

1. Know the interview form thoroughly before asking your first question.

2. Ask the questions; do not hand the interview form to the client.

3. Interview every other client (both in-person and telephone clients), starting with the first one in the day. If one client refuses, do not substitute the following client. Instead, check "Refused to be interviewed" on the form and proceed as if he were interviewed.

4. Interview only clients who use the NIC service, as it is defined in your library.

5. Introduce the interview in your own words. The point is to be persuasive in a few words and to set the interviewee at ease. A sample introduction might run like this:

   "As you know, it's important for the users of the NIC to be anonymous. But from time to time the public library needs some information on users, so we can improve the NIC service and make it reach more people. I'd like you to help me out by answering 7 questions. They're not very personal, and they won't ever be connected to your name. The first question is...."

6. Note: Questions 6 and 7 may appear fairly personal. However, Houston's staff, who pretested these forms, suggest that people are willing to respond, once it's established that no names or addresses are necessary.

7. Ordinarily, let the client volunteer his response. You may suggest a list of possible responses in q.4 and 8, after giving him a chance to respond on his own.

8. At the end of the study period, add up all responses on the Summary Sheet provided, and send the summary sheet to me.

Tom Childers
3/14/75

APPENDIX D

USERS OF NIC'S

	Atlanta	Cleveland	Detroit	Houston	Queens	Totals
Number of interviews	160	14	205	111	90	580
Number of refusals	10	2	11	9	5	37
Number of clients served	170	27	2,732	303	163	3,395
1. Used NIC Before?						
Yes	50	1	100	28	27	205
No	56	13	106	82	62	319
Don't remember	26		2	1	9	38
No response	28					28
2. Used public library before?						
No	18	1	61	34	14	128
Don't remember	14		2	2	3	21
Yes	124	11	142	57	74	408
-within 6 months	95	8	63	41	62	268
-within 1 year	23	3	30	4	4	64
-don't remember	6		50	10	10	76
-no response	4			2		6
3. First heard of NIC through:						
friend, etc.	25	3	40	16	19	103
radio	4	1	18	21		44
television	6		15	5		26
newspaper	1		21	4	1	27
referred	22		10	2	4	38
NIC personnel	25	3	21	31	27	107
NIC materials	10	5	44	21	27	107
Other	18	1	22	6	6	53
No response	49	1				50
4. Live in area.						
Yes	121	9	106	83	75	390
No	39	5	100	31	15	190

	Atlanta	Cleveland	Detroit	Houston	Queens	Totals
5. Number of club memberships.						
0	96	5	81	70	40	292
1	27	3	28	11	20	89
2	17	4	34	8	10	73
3	5	1	21	8	10	45
4	6	1	8	2	4	21
5	2	0	3	0	5	10
More than 5	4	0	7	4	2	17
No response	3		12			15
6. Age						
Under 19	8	1	17	7	9	42
19 - 34	85	7	74	55	23	244
35 - 44	35	2	52	28	16	133
45+	17	4	60	19	38	138
No response	15		2	2	4	23
7. Education						
1	1					1
2						0
3			1	1		2
4			1			1
5	1		1	2		4
6			1	8		9
7	1		1	3	1	6
8	5		6	10	5	26
9	2	2	1	7	5	17
10	2	1	4	13	7	27
11	10		8	6	11	35
12	49	5	39	28	35	156
freshman	8	1	1	3	3	16
sophomore	16		9	8	7	40
junior	7	1	6	2	3	19
senior	11	1	7	10	7	36
graduate work	39	1	14	6	3	63
No response	8	2	102			
8. Male	55	8	66	31	27	187
Female	87	6	138	74	47	352
?				1		1
No response	18		1	5	16	40

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Dear

A small national study is currently being conducted, focusing on information and referral activities in metropolitan areas. We hope the study will help public officials assess the need for such activities in today's society, so we have happily volunteered to help collect the data.

Would you please take just a few minutes to fill out the attached questionnaire and return it to us in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible. We would like to have your response within a week, please.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX F

NATIONAL INFORMATION AND REFERRAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What kind of agency or organization are you? (Check only one.)
___Welfare ___Health ___Legal ___Religious ___Community
___Social service ___Educational ___Other (specify:)

2. Is there a general information and referral service available to citizens in your city -- one that can put them in touch with the full range of services and activities in the metropolitan area?
___No ___Yes (please specify:)

3. For your city, what kind of agency would be the most appropriate for putting people in touch with the full range of services and activities?

4. Have you ever received an information request or referral from the public library? ___Yes ___No ___Don't know

5. If yes, considering all agencies from whom you receive referrals, those coming from the library are: (Circle most appropriate number.)
Most effective: 1 2 3 4 5 :Least effective

6. Does your public library have a formal information and referral service available to the public? ___Yes ___No ___Don't know

7. If yes, please write the name of that service here:

8. From your agency's point of view, library information/referral services should be
___expanded ___kept at current level ___curtailed ___eliminated

If you wish, would you write the name of your agency/organization here, please:

Please return this form to the officer of the public library who sent it to you.

Thank you for your cooperation.

tc.3/75

APPENDIX G

AGENCY DATA ("National information and Referral Questionnaire")

Select 20 agencies from your major resource, or agency, file in this way: Beginning with the agency in the 's, select every fourth agency, until you have 20. Eliminate only those that you know are defunct. Maintain a list of the sample agencies.

Prepare cover letters for each agency and send a cover letter along with a questionnaire and a stamped return envelope. Note: Do not identify the NIC or any similar service on the cover letter or envelopes!

Give them about four weeks to come back, then send the completed questionnaires to me. I'll tabulate them here. Send the list of sample agencies along, too.

The letter, questionnaire and return envelopes should all go out to the agencies by the end of March. Forward all the responses to me in the last week of April.

Dr. Thomas Childers
Graduate School of Library Science
Drexel University
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104
(215) 895-2490

tc.3/75

APPENDIX H

RESPONSES OF AGENCIES TO NATIONAL INFORMATION AND REFERRAL QUESTIONNAIRE

	Atlanta	Cleveland	Detroit	Houston	Queens	Totals
Number of responses Received/Sent	13/25	15/20	11/21	5/20	14/24	58/110
1. Kind of agency						
Welfare	1					1
Health (incl. mental)		2		3	3	8
Legal			1		2	3
Religious	1	1				2
Community	1		1	1	1	4
Social service	8	6	1		2	17
Educational		4	5		2	7
Gov't admin.	1	1	3		2	4
Other	1	1		1	2	5
2. Is there a general I & R in city?						
Yes	11	13	6	5	11	46
No	2		3		2	7
Don't know					1	1
No response		2	2			4
3. Most appropriate agency						
No response	2	4	3	2	6	17
New agency	3	1	1		3	8
There isn't any				1		1
Public library	1	1	3		1	6
Own non-assoc'd agnc.	1				2	3
Existing agency (non-library)	6	9	4	2	2	23
Other						
4. Ever received referral from public library?						
Yes	3	7	5	1	5	21
No	5	5	4	3	6	23
Don't know	5	3	2	1	3	14

	Atlanta	Cleveland	Detroit	Houston	Queens	Totals
5. Effectiveness						
1	1	1			1	3
2	1	2	1		1	5
3		2	2		1	5
4			1	1		2
5	1	2	1		1	5
No response					1	1
6. I & R in public library?						
Yes	3	6	8	1	4	22
No	1			1		2
Don't know	9	9	3	3	10	34
7. Name of service? Roughly or exactly accurate	1		4			5
No name, or wrong	2	6	4	1	4	17
8. Public library I & R should be:						
Expanded	6	10	8	3	11	38
Kept current level	4	2	2	1	1	10
Curtailed						
Eliminated	2	1				3
No response	1	2	1	1	2	7

ENDNOTES

1. "Dispenser" will be used to refer to agents, agencies, organizations, companies, etc., which dispense resources needed by a client.

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9. Singer, Benjamin. Feedback and Society: A Study in the Uses of Mass Channels for Coping. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1973. P. 69.

10. Singer, op. cit., p. 70.

11. Singer, op. cit., p. 68.

12. Franklin and Summers, op. cit., p. 79.

13. Donohue, Joseph C. "Some Experiments Fail: The Public Information Center Project at the Enoch Pratt Free Library." Library Journal 100 (June 15, 1975): 1185-1190.

14. Crowley, Terence and Thomas Childers. Information Service in Public Libraries: Two Studies. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1971.

ABSTRACT

In July 1972 five cities -- Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston and Queens Borough -- joined in a consortium sponsored by the Office of Education, with the purpose of demonstrating the feasibility of using existing library branches as neighborhood information centers. This volume is the final report and the research summary of the experience of those five cities during the three years of federal funding, from July 1972 through June 1975. The majority of the report is devoted to the research summary, by an outside consultant. It includes a discussion of the nature of information and referral (I & R) service and the role of the public library as an I & R center, an evaluative sketch of each of the five cities' efforts, a summary of what can be learned from the Project, and recommendations for future research and demonstrations. Data was taken from earlier studies, from site visits, from questionnaires sent to social agencies and from interviews with library clients.